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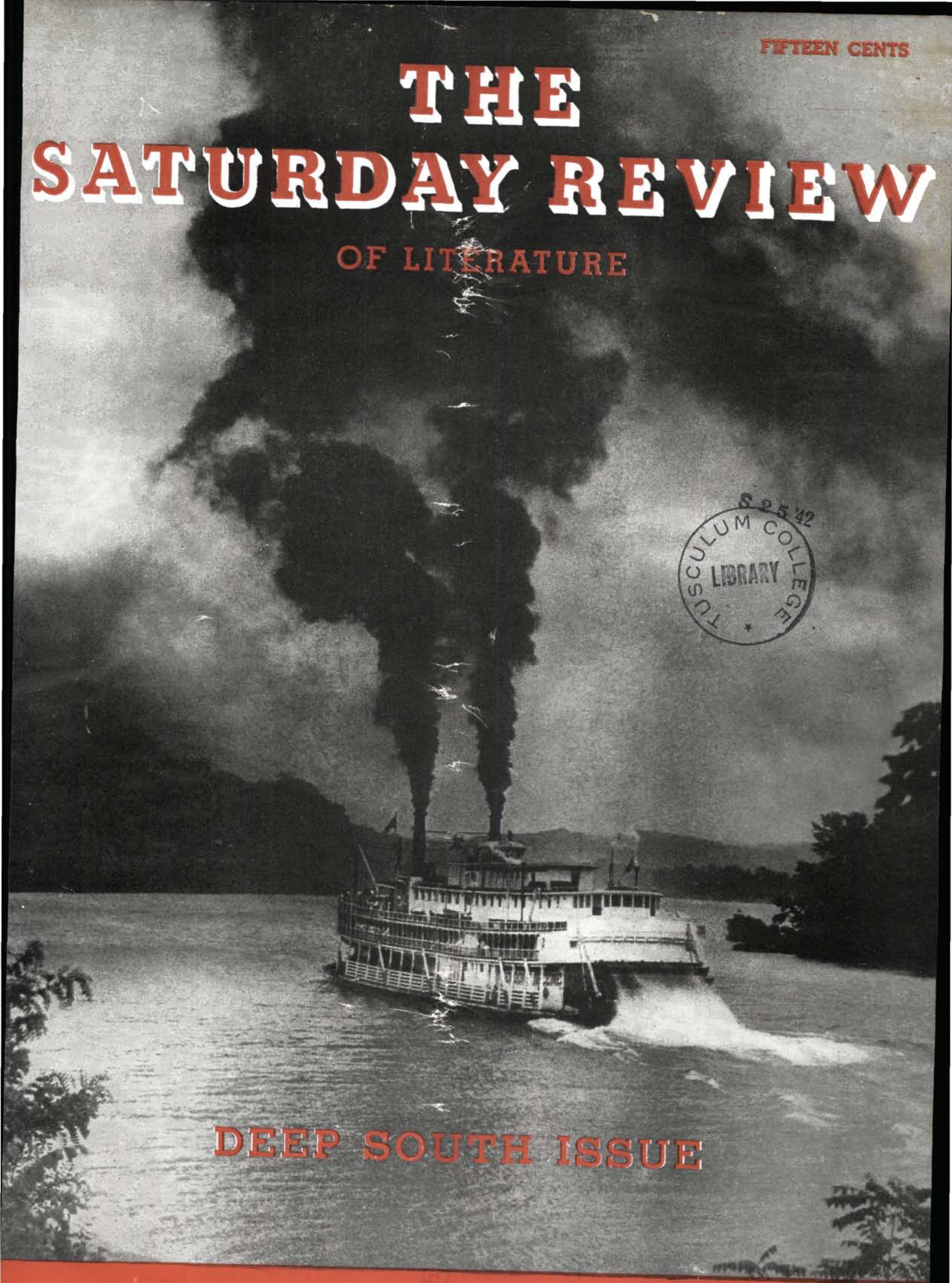
THE SATURDAY REVIEW

OF LITERATURE



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DEEP SOUTH ISSUE

VOL. XXV NO. 28 SEPTEMBER 19 1942

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—From the drawing by Alexander Key, in "Suwannee River."

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Deep South

An Editorial

THE Deep South, for the purposes of this special edition of *The Saturday Review,* is defined to consist of the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, together with those portions of Arkansas and Tennessee bordering on the Mississippi river. Such a definition neither explains nor illuminates anything—if indeed any definition ever does—but merely simplifies the labors of the jackleg editor who has undertaken a task for which he is fitted neither by training nor by temperament.

There was a time when the Deep South—poor, proud, and prolific—contented itself with producing large families, politicians, houn'-dawgs, cotton, corn, sorghum, bee-martin gourds, hell-defying revivalists, and poetesses of the Confederacy. It still produces all these, but latterly it has begun to turn out writers and, being a land of excess, it turns out so many that the editor, seeking a representative selection from Deep South writers, was bewildered by the richness of his choice. His difficulty was further increased by the fact that many of them, during the hot summer of 1942, were so busy writing books that they could not turn aside from their labors to be represented here. One consequence is that this edition barely scratches the surface of Deep South writing. The other—more alarming—is that unless somebody in the area drops the pen for the plow, or for other honest labor, there will be few left to hoe the cotton, dig the sweet potatoes, or dress the hogs.

Deep South writing proceeds from a strange environment. It is, first of all, the poorest, most illiterate, most violent, and emotional section of the country. It has had, in general, no literary background such as distinguishes New England. Before the Civil War its best brains went into politics while the gentleman, who almost alone of the entire population had the leisure and training for writing, regarded creativeness as vulgar and contented himself with sensory living. It is today a society almost primitively simple on the surface and almost incomprehensibly complex beneath the surface. The life of every white man in the area is profoundly affected by the presence of the Negro, just as the life of every Negro is profoundly affected by the presence of the white man. Each is a problem for the other. There has never been a free white man in the Deep South—as there is in Vermont—because his entire life and ways of living individually and institutionally are conditioned by the presence of multitudes of Negroes (in Issaqueena County, Mississippi, there are five thousand Negroes and five hundred whites), and consequently no one knows precisely what a Deep Southerner is since he functions in an environment of which he is a prisoner.

This is no fault of the Negro. It is simply a fact. Consequently the Deep South writer—who is himself affected by the environment—is dealing with distorted whites suffering from more or less severe psychological aberrations. These aberrations are inevitable when you consider that the whole society is kept perilously going not only by written laws but by dozens of unwritten and unwritable laws; by an exquisite and intuitive sense of tact on the part of members of both races; by adherence to a labyrinthine code of manners, taboos, and conventions. The bed on which both races lie is Procrustean for all that it is covered with honeysuckle and illuminated by yellow moonlight. On such a bed men toss uneasily at night and arise fatigued in the morning.

Deep South society, affected by distorted whites and Negroes, is further complicated by the presence of thousands of poor whites who are looked down upon by quality white folks and are scorned by the Negroes while they, in turn, hate the blacks with a venomous hatred and have long been arising to political power which—in a land of excess—they naturally sometimes use to excessive ends. Add to this the fact that the Deep South in its manners and traditions is still near to the frontier. No one sues for libel in this area, or for the alienation of his wife's affections. Justice—or revenge—in such cases is in a man's own hands. If he takes it, according to the custom of the country, public opinion backs him; if he does not, he is regarded as a weakling if not a coward and thereafter is a shadow without substance in the affairs of the community.

It is this land—a land one feels that has a doom upon it—that Deep South writers have long been interpreting and explaining to one another and to readers from other sections of the country who, however much they decry it, seem to find themselves irresistibly enchanted by it. Some part of that interpretation and explanation is here. No pretense is made that it gets to the bottom of the well or that this issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature* is more than a tentative sounding. Nor would the editor be rash enough to say that this is a well that can be plumbed.

DAVID L. COHN,
Guest Editor

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CONTRIBUTORS AND CONTENTS

This is the second in the series of special issues of *The Saturday Review* given over to a literary inventory of America. The first, devoted to the Southwest, and edited by John McGinnis, appeared several months ago. The present issue will be followed by a special number on the Old, or Upper, South.

David L. Cohn, Guest Editor of this issue, is a native of the Mississippi Delta country, and knows at first hand the special economic and social problems of the South. He is a frequent contributor to periodical literature, and is the author of a number of books ranging from "God Shakes Creation," a portrait of the Delta region, and "Picking America's Pockets," which deals with the economic consequences of the tariff, to "The Good Old Days"—the life and times of the Sears, Roebuck catalogue. His editorial appears on *Page* 3.

Howard W. Odum is director of the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina, and the editor of *Social Forces.* His reputation as an authority on regionalism is nation-wide, his "American Regionalism" representing a standard work in the field. He is also the author of "Southern Regions," a landmark in the field of social research. Mr. Odum's article, "The Patterns of Regionalism in the Deep South," begins on *Page* 5.

Roark Bradford's novels and stories about Southern Negroes are widely known, especially "Old Man Adams and His Chillun," "John Henry," and "Kingdom Coming." Mr. Bradford is by way of becoming a New Orleans institution, as out-of-town writers visiting the city soon discover. His article, "A Southerner Discovers the Professional Southerner," appears on *Page* 7.

Cleanth Brooks is a member of the English Department of the Louisiana State University, where for the past seven years he has been an editor of *The Southern Review.* His study of contemporary poetry, "Modern Poetry and the Tradition," was published by the University of North Carolina Press. Mr. Brooks writes on "What Deep South Literature Needs," appearing on *Page* 8.

Harry Harrison Kroll is a member of the English Department of the University of Tennessee Junior College. After working in such trades as photography, sign painting, and illustrating, he became interested in writing. His books about the South include "The Cabin in the Cotton," "I Was A Sharecropper," and "The Usurper." Mr. Kroll's "Deep South—Never, Never Land" appears on *Page* 10.

Phil Stone is a Mississippian, a lawyer and neighbor of William Faulkner, who has written articles for various periodicals. Mr. Stone's article on "William Faulkner and His Neighbors" appears on *Page* 12.

Harnett T. Kane, ace reporter and feature writer on the *New Orleans Item,* catapulted to recognition with his "Louisiana Hayride," the story of Huey Longism. Mr. Kane is now at work on a follow-up book which may be completed in time for publication next year. Mr. Kane examines another Louisiana phenomenon in the issue—"Andrew Jackson Higgins—Louisiana Big Man," on *Page* 13.

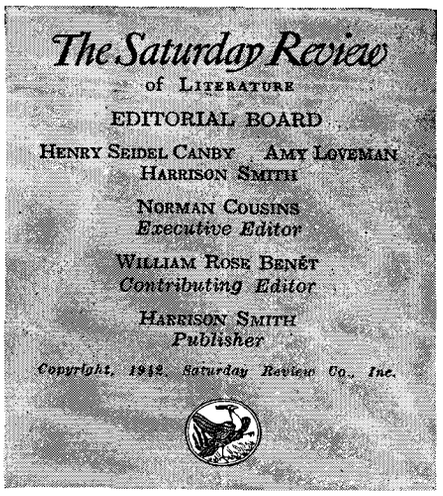
Jennie Gardner is the editor of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal's* book review department, which in her hands has become an influential medium in the South. Miss Gardner's "Book Reviewing in the Deep South" appears on *Page* 15.

Gwen Bristow, newspaperwoman and novelist who has her roots in the Deep South, is now living and working in Hollywood. She is the author of the well-known Louisiana trilogy which includes "Deep Summer," "The Handsome Road," and "This Side of Glory." Miss Bristow reviews Hamilton Basso's "Sun in Capricorn" on *Page* 16.

Albert Goldstein has been for many years the book review editor of the *New Orleans Times Picayune.* He is friend and critic of all the various movements and personalities that have flourished in his interesting city. Mr. Goldstein reviews Harold Sinclair's "The Port of New Orleans" on *Page* 17.

John Temple Graves II is on the editorial staff of the Birmingham *Age-Herald.* His talents and interests are broad; he has written fiction and poetry as well as literary criticism and essays on economic and political questions. His syndicated column appears daily in a number of Southern newspapers. Mr. Graves contributes two reviews—one on John Faulkner's "Dollar Cotton" (*Page* 20); the other, Sam Byrd's "Small Town South" (*Page* 21).

Eudora Welty, of Jackson, Mississippi, is the author of "A Curtain of Green," a collection of short stories published recently, which won for her a Guggenheim fellowship. Miss Welty's first full-length novel, "The Robber Bridegroom," will be published next month. Miss Welty's review of "But You'll Be Back," by Marguerite Steedman, appears on *Page* 22.



Robert Penn Warren, a native of Kentucky, is the author of a novel, "Night Rider," a biography, "John Brown," two volumes of poetry, and numerous short stories and critical essays. For the past seven years he has been in the English Department of Louisiana State University, and an editor of *The Southern Review.* Recently, however, he has accepted a professorship in English at the University of Minnesota. Mr. Warren reviews Brainard Cheney's "River Rogue," on *Page* 25.

E. P. (Pat) O'Donnell was born in New Orleans, where he now lives. His novel, "Green Margins," won him a Houghton Mifflin Fellowship and was a choice of the Book-of-the-Month Club when it was published in 1936. He is now completing a book about the Mississippi Delta country, which will be published as part of the American Folkways series. Mr. O'Donnell contributes a poem, "Lines to Jules Petit," on *Page* 26.

Marion McClure is responsible for the art work in this issue. Miss McClure, the wife of a New Orleans newspaperman, is the executive secretary of the Vieux Carré Commission in that city, whose work in restoring the French Quarter to its old charm and beauty has won the admiration and gratitude of all those who regard the Quarter as perhaps the most colorful section of any city in America.

The Cover for this issue is from the photograph by Henry Flannery (*U. S. Camera*).

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Patterns of Regionalism in the Deep South

HOWARD W. ODUM

IN presenting the setting for regional portraiture in the United States, it must be emphasized over and over again that regionalism is the opposite of localism, separatism, and provincialism. That is, there is no concept of the region and, therefore, of American regionalism except in terms of the total nation and national culture, of which the different regions are component and constituent units. It ought not to be necessary to keep emphasizing this, but it is necessary because of the extraordinary ignorance in America, one region of another, each region of all, the total nation of all of its constituent regional parts.

The task of Southern portraiture is both easy and difficult. It is easy because of the richness of tradition, the expectation of the people to have something different, southern, interesting, and pathological. It is difficult because of the well-nigh impossible task of interpreting to the public the realities of this regional culture. High ranking professors, brilliant literary folk, intellectuals of great European experience and culture, although sensing the distinctions in European culture, find it difficult not to follow the stage pictures and caricature of the South. In my recent review of Virginius Dabney's "Below the Potomac" in the *SRL*, I called attention to the fact that, although the South has been the best documented region of all and has had a great variety of literature, economic and social research, and the like, it still seems likely that the South is the least understood of all the great regions of America. The still prevailing picture of the South is of a fantastic South pictured for the nation, on the one hand, by the romanticist and, on the other, by the photographers of pathology. Both of these represent a South that "never was on land or sea." Thus the South in some ways has the double handicap of its own earlier sectionalism, isolationism, economic and cultural handicaps within the region, and the almost universal picture of cultural separatism which the rest of the country assumes to be the realistic South.

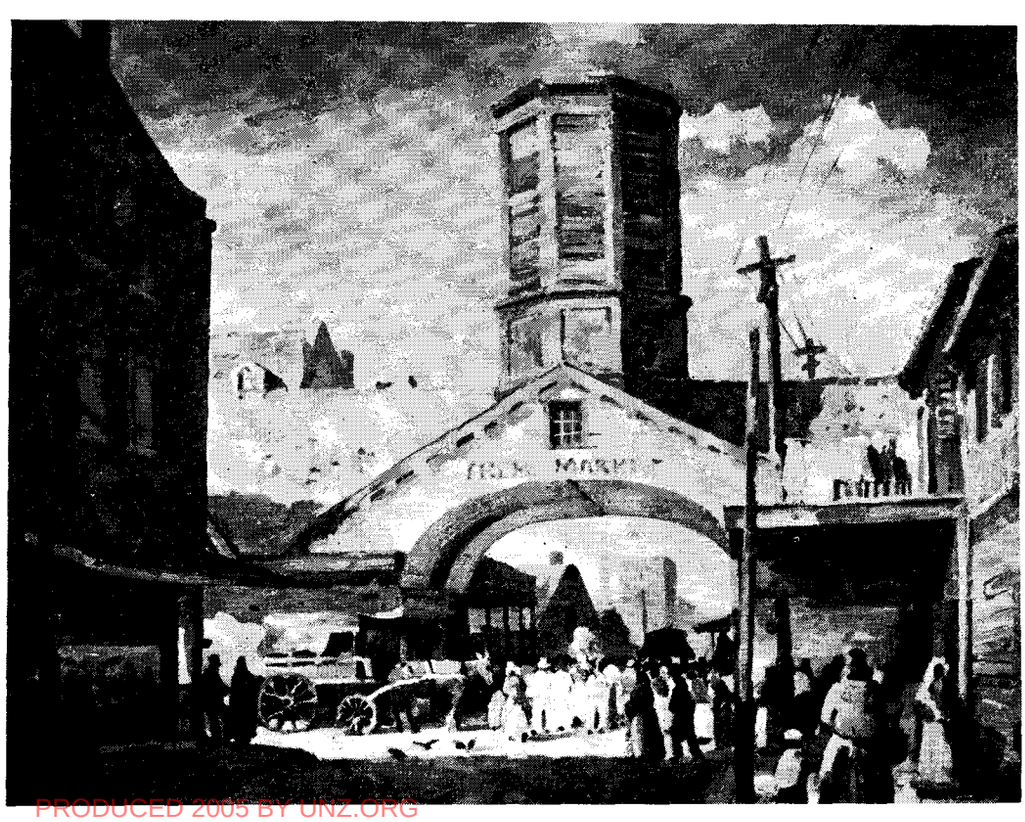
Nevertheless, in the totality of the literature and appraisals, in the experience of visitors, and coöperative educational experiments, in the trends of the South to revitalize its culture and economy, so that the way of the South and the good society and the nation will be the same, may be found a reasonable residuum of differentiating characterization of the region.

We might begin with the characterization of the *Solid South* with reference to politics, which has been after all an accurate characterization. Manifestly, the basis is found primarily in the cultural historical background of the Civil War and slavery, involving various complications of a lily-white party and the skalliwags and carpetbaggers of the reconstruction period. Later there were not only the hazards of reconstruction, but the cotton and tobacco economy, the consequent development of the South as a creditor region, with its drain of soil, men, and resources resulting in a characterization of deficiency in the midst of what might have been potential abundance. King Cotton, the farm tenant system, the plantation economy, the bi-racial population and culture—all of these represent cultural socio-economic foundations for what the South was and is.

Let's look realistically and perhaps in an over-simplified way at some aspects of this Deep South. Since the most comprehensive and demonstrable difference between the South and other regions is that of bi-racial culture and attitudes, it is of the utmost importance to understand how these differences have grown up as parts of the organic culture of the regions. For instance with reference to race, I have often said to our own groups that Southerners are often *the best people in the world doing the worst things*. I can illustrate both the goodness and the badness of it by a simple example. Many a Southerner could recognize the inevitable when Sherman swept through the land, burning homes, confiscating supplies and property, and killing the flower of the land. This was war. But when later, you remember, the Northern churches set up the edict that none of the elite could go to Heaven unless they accepted racial equality, this was the limit, and the good people began to do bad things through the Klu-Klux and other organizations. The whole issue represented to them the slogan for which men live and die, namely, "For God, for country and for home." These principles meant "for God," because it had become a part of their religious teachings and the issue separated the churches, only recently united. It meant "for country" because there was loyalty to the Confederacy and the states which was the first essence of patriotism. And it meant "for home" because in the fixed gulf which was impassable between the castes of black and white there was race purity. Now people who are willing to die "for God, for

Treme Market in New Orleans

—From the painting by Clarence Millet



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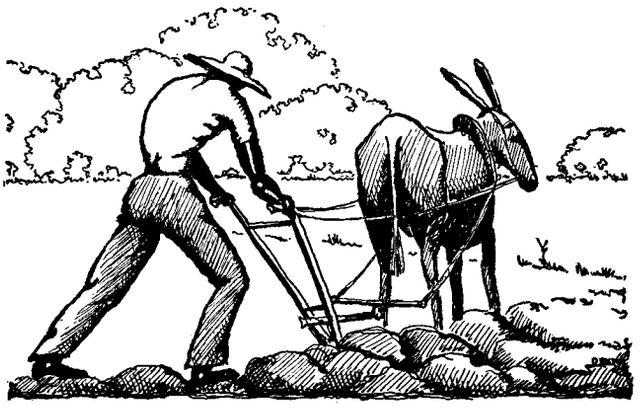
country and for home" have not ordinarily been considered bad people. Yet not only in the South but in the wide range of world cultures, good people doing bad things have wrought havoc, sometimes world war, no less in the modern era than civil war in the early America.

We conclude, therefore, that our first and most distinctive difference between the South and the other regions is the existence of an organic bi-racial civilization in the Southeast made up of the dominant white "state-society" and the subordinate Negro "folk-society" within the region. No matter what other differences may abound, it must be clear that the Negro-White relationship in the Southeast distinguishes it from all other regions. If, therefore, one is looking for an inventory of exclusive differences and it is possible for him to catalogue the differences of traits in the South that are bottomed in race relations, he will understand the essential difference between the South and other regions.

IT is of the utmost importance to understand the significance of all this in order to understand both the entire configuration of southern culture and also the difficulties, promise and prospect of ameliorative conditions in the future. In the total folkways and mores of the South which have long since been made to coincide with the stateways through legislation, the Negro and White are separated by an unbridgeable chasm of caste. Race is the incidence of the caste which is not based on race or economic competition but upon the inexorable assumption of complete separation of the races insofar as sanctioned sex relations in the family are concerned. Race, then, and economic class conditions are part of the total incidence of the complex. And what is more, this is not only the most difficult of all the southern situations, but it is the one which seems well-nigh impossible to interpret to the other regions of the nation.

Now what we have pointed out is that southern culture and economy, particularly as it relates to bi-racial civilization, has been so fundamentally conditioned that it is an organic part of southern society. It follows the evolutionary development of all cultures through the folkways, mores, institutions, and later through the making of the stateways and folkways coincide in the program of coercive bi-racial institutions. If southern society has grown up inexorably and organically after this fashion, it must be clear that it cannot be changed over-night. The enthusiasm of many friends of the South and the extreme measures recommended by many people, both White and Negro, from the other regions have led the South to adapt the same characterization which I have used above, namely, that many of the best people in other regions do not always do the best things in their approach. And all of this has nothing whatever to do with the relative rights and wrongs in the situation. Most Southerners who are frank and honest necessarily have to reply when accused of not giving the Negro justice and fairness in some such words as "Who says we do?" "Now how can we go on from here and make the optimum adjustment?"

For, the Deep South in the earnestness and emotional frankness of its tradition feels honestly that the rest of the country does not respect that plank in the Atlantic Charter which emphasizes a belief in the right of a people to choose how they shall be governed. Here again, I suspect there is no inclination on the part of most of us who are frank to deny many of the things that are said about us. Contrariwise, the southern dilemma is one of several dimensions rather than anything so simple as a mere problem of right and wrong. First of all, the South is forever asking: Can't you understand? Don't you see? Isn't it clear how all these problems have arisen; how they are the inevitable products of cause and effect; how the situation could not be otherwise? Don't you see the difficulties involved? Don't you see the tremendous progress which we have made? What would you do with 10,000,000 people to educate with nothing to educate them with? Won't you help us to develop this situation instead of complicating it? Won't you give us responsible criticism and coöperation? How can we all working together best make adjustment to the balanced economy, to give landless men land and workless people work? And isn't it true that the South has something distinctive to offer and that already in its new regionalism is rapidly balancing its people and resources, increasing its capacity to contribute to the richness of the nation's culture and economy, and rapidly reducing much of its violence of race conflict?



—*Drawings by Lucien Dent*

NOW all of this that we are discussing is, of course, the White South. The South usually is the White South. Now, of course, there is the Negro South with all of its "excellence" and extraordinary progress in culture and economy alongside its difficulties and hazards. There is a new Negro South in the upper brackets of leadership and cultural development. There is a new Negro South in the middle class group of admirable proportions and achievements. There is a new Negro South in the Negro college youth. All of these, even as the White South, have the heritage of the best and the hazards which have grown up in the bi-racial culture. Some of this is still economic. All of it is of magnificent proportions in every sense of the word, including its part as a dramatic picture in the nation; including the sublimity and tragedy of rapidly growing racial culture; including the complex of the southern whites' aspirations and achievements.

I am inclined to think that few episodes in the South could be more eloquent of the southern situation than the present South's ideological patriotism in the military participation of the war. One of the most frequently asked questions of recent months has

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related to the reasons why the South is more militantly all-out for the war than any other region. There are many reasons for this but some of them may be explained on the basis of the South's economic and cultural background. Perhaps we want to make up for certain limitations which we have had. We have been hammered and criticized so much as being outside the nation that here is a good opportunity to show that we are not only in the nation but all-out for a greater participation than any other region. We have had so many problems of our own about which we differ so much that for once it seems good to tackle a problem about which we all agree and one that is farther away from home. If we can fight for world democracy, it will give us more time and escape to come to later reckonings about our own bi-racial civilization. And besides, the South with its homogeneity of people and with its traits of earlier America is a fighting South, subscribing to the doctrine that no foreign nation can insult us or hurt us and get away with it. The South, too, has always been close to Britain and still again among other reasons, the South knows what it is to be defeated and to pay the price of being over-run. All of this added up with the South's ideology for patriotism enables it to make a fine over-all contribution to the national forces.

—From the mural by Frank Long.

A Southerner Discovers the Professional Southerner

ROARK BRADFORD

THE trouble with the South is we are not far enough south. What I mean is we—even in the Deep South—are so close to the North, our prodigals can return and bring with them itinerant theories which in no way contribute to the general welfare and pursuit of happiness. Climatically we do very well although we could stand warmer winters.

Since this piece has to do with the Professional Southerner and since a man's meteorological remarks are the epitome of his spiritual being, I shall clean up the weather situation first.

Our winters range in temperature from below freezing up to the middle sixties. When the thermometer registers between thirty-five and fifty degrees the weather is bad. The skies are overcast and it rains or sleets. We are uncomfortable and depressed. During such weather some of us get pneumonia and die. Others sit by the fire and drink hot toddies. The more enlightened indulge in reading, conversation, and music. It isn't ideal but it's the best we can do.

The Professional Southerner on such days travels from home to home and in each circle of shin-toasting neighbors, he blurts out his stock phrase: "This-kind-of-weather-gets-me-down-I-spent-a-winter-in-Boston-once-and-didn't-suffer-half-as-much-this-goes-right-into-your-bones." The Professional Southerner may be defined as a returned but unregenerated prodigal. From that point, he becomes individual and divergent, both in degree and direction of his unpleasantness.

More often than not, he has been Up North and Learned How It Is Done, and he is now back home Determined to Do Something About It. Generally, though not always, he is the son or grandson of an exploiter of gentle people and his education in the North was paid for by the fruits of such exploitation. He has studied sociology and economics, he has read a little philosophy, and frequently he has a literary yen.

If his lack of orientation amounts to a downright maladjustment, the Professional Southerner will major in psychology and work on a screwball thesis in which he will document a few obvious facts and for which he will later receive a Ph. D. This type represents the least harmful Professional Southerner. At worst, he becomes a professor in some northern university and is heard from no more. At best, he gets pneumonia and dies. Or his absurdities may involve such slapstick comedy as was noticeable in what I shall call the Natchez Inquiry.

Natchez, Mississippi, (Alt. 202, pop. 13,422) has provided the south with beauty, excitement, and mirth. Some of its old homes are probably the most beautiful on the continent, and some of its women are noted for their loveliness and charm. Culturally, the good old American tune, "Turkey in the Straw," originated there. For excitement and horror, the Jenny Merrill murder case made William Faulkner's novels look like Victorian romances. The whole South chuckled when rival garden clubs had at each other in the courts over which society had the right to represent the Old South in the city's annual side-show for tourists. And the South laughed out loud at the expert testimony used to clear up another lawsuit. This involved the collection of some fire insurance.

According to press reports, one of the fine old homes of Natchez caught fire. The house was filled with valuable antiques and the grounds were studded with rare horticulture. The insurance company claimed that the owner—a New Orleans-born lady—impeded the work of the firemen by refusing to allow them to trample the shrubs. The whole issue boiled down to testimony by experts on whether, under the circumstances, a Southern Lady had the right to call a fireman a son-of-a-bitch.

I LIKE Natchez for things like that. But I dislike the Professional Southerners who use the grand old town as a springboard for a pseudo-scientific paper on mass magnetism. Videlecit:

There are, or were when my spies last reported, two Professional Southerners and two auxiliary outlanders documenting the movements of the people of Natchez. It seems that a Negro was in Natchez jail awaiting the execution of a court sentence to be hanged. The above mentioned four psychologists were not, from all accounts, interested in whether the Negro had been the victim of racial prejudice or whether the crime was the result of a civil or social error which might conceivably be corrected. It

(*Continued on page* 27)

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What Deep South Literature Needs

CLEANTH BROOKS

EUDORA WELTY's fine first book of short stories, "A Curtain of Green," was reviewed a few months ago under the title "The Gothic South." The title and the review itself impressed me with the lack of understanding which the writer of the Deep South has to face. I do not mean lack of sympathy, necessarily, or lack of interest. I do not even mean to insist that the characterization of the present South as Gothic may not shed some illumination, though I do not think that it does. Moreover, it is quite possible that Miss Bogan's comparison of Eudora Welty to Gogol, and the analogies which she draws between the Southern scene and the Russian are quite legitimate, and may serve to suggest to her readers, by allowing them to move from the known to the unknown, something of the character of the strange land which borders the Gulf.

Miss Bogan goes on to say: "the inhabitants of a big house (either mad, drunk, or senile), the idiots and ageless peasant women, the eccentric . . . all these could come out of some broken-down medieval scene . . . " Doubtless they could, and, if one is allowed some liberty in defining "medieval," doubtless they have. I have no disposition to quarrel with the text of Miss Bogan's review. What I am interested in is the obvious effort to comprehend the strange. As Miss Bogan herself says: "so much of the work of writers from the American South has puzzled critics." Much of it does clearly puzzle them. There is an honest lack of understanding of the section itself, and as a consequence, a lack of understanding of the attitude of the Southern author toward his material.

—*Fabian Bachrach*

William Bradford Huie's "Mud on the Stars" would represent the New South, rather than the old.

It is for this reason that the Southern author who essays the fantastic may discover to his amusement or alarm that he is a savage realist mercilessly exposing a land of Yahoos, or he may be quite as much surprised to discover that his serious consideration of a topic is a willful exploitation of the unreal and romantic. Of course, this state of affairs is not merely to be accounted for by the country's intense interest in and ignorance of the South. It is in part the result of the decay of our ability to read, and of our current confusions about the nature of literature.

But, for whatever reasons, the Deep South is peculiarly cursed with those twin evils of modern literature: sociologism and romantic escapism. The writer is forced into one category or the other, willy-nilly. Some years ago, in *The New Republic*, Mr. Hamilton Basso attempted to separate the sheep from the goats, that is, the progressive writers from the traditionalists. A good deal of squeezing and stretching was necessary to make the division work. That Mr. Basso, a novelist of some ability himself, should try to set up this distinction is convincing testimony in itself of the extent to which it dominates our minds: the Southern writer *must* be either whitewashing the magnolia blossom or urging us to some particular reform.

Of course there are writers who are ready-measured for the Procrustean bed, or rather, writers who cynically measure themselves for it—by studying the market and giving the public what it thinks it wants. They dish up local color to order, or write exposés or defenses. This local color literature is probably at its worst when it attempts to reproduce, for a *Ladies' Home Journal* audience, imitations of "Gone with the Wind." It is probably seen at its best when it abandons the form of fiction altogether and attempts frankly, like Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings's recent "Cross Creek," to give an account, written with some charm and sympathy, of the habits of the natives.

E. P. (Pat) O'Donnell's "Green Margins" does more than purvey quaintness to the bored metropolis.

It is not surprising, of course, that in Southern literature the peculiarities of the South should come in for a great deal of attention, whether they are viewed as welcome additions to the cultural variety of the country, or as quaint and picturesque aberrations of, or abominable deviations from, the national norm. The point of importance is how the specifically Southern elements are used by the writer and how they affect his attitude toward his work.

If, as we have already suggested, the exploitation of local color tends to break out of the pattern of fiction altogether, taking the form of a travel book or an autobiography, so perhaps the attempt to make exposés or defenses, in its frankest and most honest form, also tends to desert the form of fiction. I am thinking of two recent instances, William Alexander Percy's "Lanterns on the Levee" and William Bradford Huie's "Mud on the Stars."

IT is interesting, by the way, to notice the effect which a reading of "Lanterns on the Levee" often exerts on people whose ideology demands that Percy be really a sort of Southern *Junker*, and to hear them express surprise that there might be another side to many "Southern" problems about which they had comfortably made up their minds. "Lanterns on the Levee" is a very uneven book, and undoubtedly it has been the charm of a personality rather than the cogency of an argument which has won it a favorable audience. In contrast to Percy's book, "Mud on the Stars" would

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represent the New South rather than the Old, but it too finds its interest, in spite of its sub-title, "A Novel," in an analysis of some of the forces at play on a young Southerner of this generation. If its title suggests a contradiction of "Lanterns on the Levee," the contradiction is far from absolute. The criticism of the Southern tradition which it undertakes amounts, not so much to a denial of the tradition as a modification of it.

The reason why self-conscious analyses and criticisms of the South tend to fall outside the pattern of fiction ought to be easy enough to see. Poetry, drama, and fiction at their best dramatize issues rather than argue toward solutions—they build up dramatic tensions rather than "making a case for" a particular program. If we insist that literature give a program, under penalty of being damned as irresponsible or complacent if it fails to, we shall misconstrue its purposes and probably end up by misreading it.

THE harm done, of course, varies with the seriousness of the writer's intention and the general nature of the intention. For example, Dr. Thaddeus St. Martin's "Madame Toussaint's Wedding Day," which is a charming enough bit of genre writing, will suffer little distortion; nor will the "Old Man Adam" stories of Roark Bradford (though one can see this material begin to get out of hand in "The Green Pastures" when Marc Connolly attempts a more serious ending than the material itself can bear).

Very great harm may be done, however, in the case of, say, Caldwell and Faulkner, who are frequently bracketed together to the detriment of both authors, and to the confusion of ourselves. Mr. Faulkner, if I understand him properly, is interested in tragedy, and, at his best, attains it. Mr. Caldwell, on the other hand, who possesses a real ability to use folk materials for comic effect, has frequently been pushed into propaganda for various causes with a resulting confusion of his attitude toward his material. It is not a question of talent: both men possess talent; and it is not a question of their failures. The failures of either are likely to produce the sense of mere violent, anarchic disorder. The matter of real importance is that Mr. Faulkner's readers frequently misunderstand his purpose, and that Mr. Caldwell frequently misunderstands his own purpose.

I should say that in the case of Caldwell, what comes through is a sense of terrific vitality, animal vitality, carried to the point of gusty burlesque. Caldwell deals with it most successfully, one feels, when, while preserving an artist's sympathy for it, he yet tacitly establishes some sort of esthetic distance between it and himself by treating it in terms of the grotesque. His human sympathy for his material, a sympathy which tends to translate itself into a program for the People, does credit to him as a citizen and as a man, but on occasion confuses him as an artist. Faulkner takes this vitality into account in his work, too—his novels certainly testify to its presence. But there is an attempt to define it and analyze it, to make distinctions: it may be the meaningless animal tenacity and persistence of a Snopes, or the powerful influence of the land exerted on the human beings who attempt to hold it or are held by it, or the stubborn rear-guard action fought by a Miss Emily Guierson or a Colonel Sartoris to maintain some kind of integrity under the pressure of a collapsing social pattern. But Faulkner's attitude is anything but a gleeful exultation at the collapse of a way of life; and he is not indulging in a sardonic and cynical description of decay nor is he propagandizing for a particular program which will make all shiny, sanitary, and aseptic.

To take one other instance of the pressure exerted on the reader of Southern literature or on the Southern author himself: I would suggest that a writer like Grace Lumpkin may be more serious and may be actually getting deeper into an exposition of what the South is, through some of her quieter stories about life in a Southern small town—say, "The Treasure"—than in her earlier "propaganda novels." The point I would make is not that the Southern writer should be debarred from the violent or the horrible, and certainly not from a serious treatment of his material; but rather that he has to avoid formulas of any kind, even those formulas which will tend to insure that he will "face conditions realistically and urge people to do something about them."

Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings is at her best when she abandons the fictional form.

I began this note with the observation that the writer of the Deep South faced particular difficulties because of national ignorance of his section, and because of a widespread confusion as to what the proper job of the artist is. But it would be idle to suggest that he does not possess some very real advantages. One of these I have already suggested: the vitality of the common folk of his region, and his own closeness to them. I do not mean merely that there are a great many picturesque types at his disposal for him to exploit as odd and interesting to his metropolitan audience, though this will be a temptation to which the weaker writer will succumb. I mean rather that the basic human problems about which literature has revolved present themselves in forms which can be seen sharply and apprehended dramatically. For the weaker writer, of course, it will be merely the picturesque poverty of the Negroes and poor whites, or the opportunity for sensationalism which violent and simply motivated human action offers. But for the more serious artist the fact that the problem of motivation is not muffled, but emerges concretely and overtly, offers perhaps a special stimulus and a special problem. There is a second advantage that the Southern author possesses: the contrast, on so many levels, between the pattern of life in his own section and the national pattern is so sharp that he is driven back upon an inspection of the meaning of his society and the significance of the regional pattern which is by implication, if not explicity, called in question.

PERHAPS comparisons with other provincial areas may be illuminating here. The Southerner is very apt to find himself in the position, say, of the eighteenth century Scot in the period after the union with England had brought Scotland sharply into the English consciousness. He is apt to find that his native region has for the national mind a strange ambivalent quality: it is the home of romance, of wild Highland clans, the last stubborn home of a lost cause; and on the other hand, it is the land of flea-bitten poverty, poor, bigoted, and behind the times. Or, to take another instance, since the specific Scottish parallels are not important: the Southerner may find himself in the

(*Continued on page 29*)

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Deep South — Never, Never Land

HARRY HARRISON KROLL

IN diversity of people, setting, atmosphere, drama, no section could be more fertile for regional writing. The Florida swamps and swampites; the Georgia crackers and half-forgotten grandeur of its history and big houses; the black belt of Alabama and wide delta of Mississippi; the historical relics of Mobile and New Orleans—to make an incomplete and casual catalogue;—the color and contrasts of a wide land; why is it a matter of surprise that this Deep South has known a literary renaissance, and that the revival has divided itself into the two antagonistic schools of romantic and realistic novelists?

Traditionally the Deep South has mostly been a patriarchy. This culture being essentially agrarian in character, the structure of its society was erected upon the theory of a ruling caste at the top; and beneath that the other and lesser classes according to social status, birth, and race. The South generally, the Deep South especially, had and has four fairly well defined groups: the aristocrat, born so and defined further in terms of worth and wealth; the middle-classman, conservative, conventional, and substantial; the "poor white," though never quite recognized openly as a class, but rather referred to as "local color"; and finally the Negro. Among the upper two groups there might be and often was considerable interchange. It was possible for the aristocrat to lose his wealth and station and drift back into middle-class but he never really lost his rank; the more virile and intelligent and wealthier middle-class person might achieve a species of aristocratic standing but lack of lineage was always against him; the poor white rarely reached middle-class and never top; the Negro could never make any sanctioned transition from his naturally ordained place. On the whole it was generally held that it was better for folk of lesser degree to remain content and happy in the situation in which God placed them.

So well established seems to be this idea that if it existed in an individual it would be defined as a dominant character trait. Strangely enough, it is largely fiction and myth.

Yet, wherever there are restrictions and inhibitions, real or fancied, there must always be unhappiness and rebellion among those who find them galling. For the most part the diverse groups manage to dwell in understanding, amity, and recognition of their situations. To me the wonder is not that race riots and lynchings still occur in the South but that there are so few such outbreaks of feeling. In no other place in the world do such unrelated people as whites and blacks live in more harmony. Among the white groups an unconscious toleration exists in practice. There is general recognition of personal worth, and one in any of the lower groups—except the black—may rise by his boot-straps. In some more nebulous and elusive way, however, certain restrictions exist; a sense of caste makes righteous certain kinds of exploitation; and herein lies, I think, the explanation of two such bitterly opposed schools of fiction as the romantic and realistic.

This sense of caste lay beneath the Civil War. Though the South undertook through secession to establish its freedom, this freedom was not democratic in character but autocratic. Its fundamental assumption might be defined as the thesis that men are not born free and equal, but unfree and obviously unequal. It is difficult to quarrel with so demonstrable a proposition. The fault, the frustration, lay in the tacit inhibition that personal worth, brains, energy, and ability could not cross the barrier of birth and caste.

I think this shibboleth has been cherished more jealously by the women of the South than by the men. If the South was patriarchal, there was nevertheless a power behind the throne in the form of a caste-conscious and intelligent matriarchy. The Deep South has always had the strength and the weakness of a family. The farm or plantation was a family enterprise. On a river plantation, for example, the wife and mother would have charge of a great deal of the economy, specifically of that pertaining to the home; she was familiar with the crops, how they grew or failed; she knew most if not all of the workers. If she never actually dictated to the man of the place what to do, by the very nature of the high place she occupied she tended to dominate the texture of the economy. The smaller plantations and little farms usually echoed the tone set by the fiefs. In this respect the South was matriarchal. Certainly the culture if not the economy was that.

Yet, in another way, the South was never quite so; it only seemed so. Actually the region is and always was mostly middle-class. The realists have examined the matriarchal claims to ancient lineage and have reported a dearth of actual aristocrats in any old-world terms among even the most highly placed. Those people who occupied the rich river lands and acquired wealth and built big houses, being more adventurous and enterprising and imaginative than commonplace and less vigorous folk, fabricated family trees to fill their leisure as ease of living developed. They became exclusive, just as any aristocracy of wealth tends to exclude the less wealthy.

It was this cult of un-democracy which brought about the civil war of

—From the watercolor by Wilbur Kurtz

The first Post-Office at Atlanta

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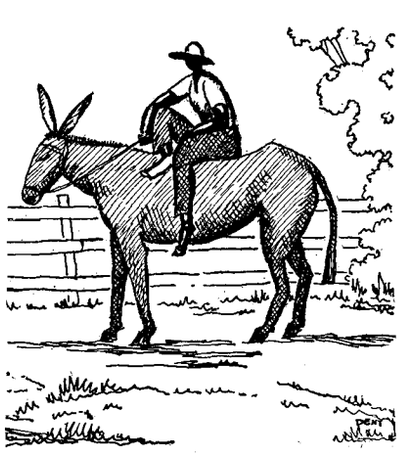
romanticism and realism in the Deep South. It made the "poor-whites" of actual worth fighting mad. They went to school, learned to read and write—particularly to write; and they became indignantly articulate. They showed that the social organization had rotten spots in it. They attacked all the ancient assumptions of caste. With horror the "quality" realized everything their culture cherished was being assailed by this up-start school, and after soundly denouncing them, took typewriter in hand for themselves and wrote nostalgic romance, in which the big house, magnolias, beautiful maidens, chaste wives, and noble men became the tribal tokens. Technicolor came along in the nick of time to fix the tradition.

BUT a more accurate token of Deep South regionalism would probably be a five-room frame house containing a neighborly, friendly family; it would have two or three children, the oldest getting ready for the university or perhaps a two-year terminal junior college; the middle one would be in high school; the youngest just finishing the grades. The father and mother probably would be high school graduates and one could have attended college. There are some books and magazines about the house. Almost inevitably there will be at least three notable volumes: a heavy leather-bound family Bible, which was inherited; the Sears-Roebuck catalogue, which was sent to them free; and a copy of "Gone with the Wind" borrowed from the library. A shelf of dog-eared school books will occupy some hidden spot. *Ladies Home Journal, Good Housekeeping,* or *American* may be the magazines; *Life* and *Time* may be there too; you will now and then find *True Story* and *True Romances*. The most talked-of best seller of the season won't be a stranger here, but some lesser circulated book not on the best selling lists but perhaps having more actual literary value is conspicuously absent. The work of the best known realistic novelist in the state won't have darkened the door; and his name generally will be held in evil repute. The family attends all the technicolor productions based on the South, and on Sunday attends, more likely than not, either a Methodist or Baptist church.

With certain regional variations, then, such as in the country the one- and two-mule farmers, you have the real and typical Deep Southerner. In the cities there will be the wealthy; they follow the urbanized patterns of any section. As the South has succumbed to industrialism and education it has lost color and individuality. The cities in the Deep South, except perhaps Mobile and New Orleans, are notable more for their likeness to cities anywhere in the United States than for their differences. In the outlands today the FHA cottages are springing up. If the South was never really "big house" it grows increasingly less so. It only thought it was more "big house" than other regions. I remember more spacious dwellings in the 25 miles between Burlington, Iowa, and Mt. Pleasant, than in the 125 miles or so from Clarkesdale, Mississippi, to Jackson. I have driven both highways many times. I remember no shacks on the Iowa highway; I do seem to remember scores of them along the Mississippi route.

After we have lived down the Hollywood myth of the Deep South and recovered somewhat from the realists' exposé of class conflict, maybe we can catch a truer vista of the region. I suspect it will be commonplace rather than dramatic; I am sure it will be middle-class rather than aristocratic. It will be increasingly industrial rather than agrarian. The war is going to hasten and deepen this change. That the gentle myth and happy fiction will survive is inevitable. These are symptoms of perennial youth: the big house always seemed larger than it was to our childish eyes; there will always be romance and beauty to translate into technicolor. More almost than any other section of the country the Deep South has the real article. Any one who has ever seen on the silver screen the big house, with a moon shining through the bearded Spanish moss clinging to the live oaks, knows that the lovers are coming and are going to kiss; and it won't be long until the darkies come up from the quarters, kneel on the lawn, lift their hands and their voices, and break out in song. How could any one mistake the region as Mississippi or Louisiana? We don't care if it's fact or myth; we love it, and we should.

If it ever existed at all, I can envy it as a way of life. I can think of no nicer calling than sitting on the big gallery and sipping mint juleps while I tell the overseer what to tell the niggers to do; and I get rich, and the slaves get happy, and the overseer grows prosperous. When the show is over I can return to my five-room house, listen awhile to the radio, which was made in Syracuse; glance at a picture journal edited in Chicago, and at last go to bed in a bed manufactured in Grand Rapids on an innerspring mattress made in St. Louis, all bought on installments from Sears-Roebuck; and snore happily in a Deep South dialect.



—Drawing by Lucien Dent

Maybe there isn't any Deep South.

And yet: I have been pretty much over the entire region known as Deep South. My memory is cluttered with a thousand images of it. I remember a long, hot, white highway southward from Chattanooga to Atlanta, in burning summer; and what remains of that trek is not Tara, but hand-tufted bedspreads waving in blinding light in front of every cabin and shack; and cantaloupes by the truckload at two-bits a bushel. I stopped off the pavement in the thin, stifling shade of a clump of pines and ate till my eyes popped. I went on to Tuskegee. There were washed hills, abandoned lands, bleak and sunburnt old plank houses, and shacks and cabins; at Tuskegee I watched for the nice educated young colored folks, and I remember today much more vividly a Negro street singer in my boyhood home town singing "I wish I could burn out the seat of old Booker T. Washington's britches," to the tune of "Just because she made dem goo-goo eyes." From Montgomery to Mobile I have a vague memory of heated pavement, untilled fields covered over with some sort of pale-flowered weed; and shadeless regions parched and unreal.

I can still see the purple gulf, with huge dramatic piles of blue clouds, embroidered with silver, against a coppery tropic sky. Green waters and old Spanish forts. Pine woods. Little black-shadowy tourist camps. Hot-dog stands and beer joints and juke shacks. New Orleans, where I ate all the gumbo I wanted for 15c, and walked down through the French Quarter. Then sugar plantations. Flat houses under the live oaks and cabins under the chinaberries. Oil derricks against the stars. Up the river to Natchez—and I found more "big houses" than in all the rest of the Deep South together. Later I stood on the loess hills of Vicksburg and watched the day die in blood on the great bend of the river that Grant tried to ditch to take the city. Then the long dreamy concrete again, the delta and endless fields of cotton under a moon as big as Hollywood ever dreamed; endless miles through some of the richest land, I reckon, God ever created.

There are other vignettes: Birming-

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ham at dawn in the hollow of Alabama mountains, all smokes and smells; winding gravel roads down Alabama and Mississippi way, through thin hill country, with little bitter gaunt farms half-eroded away; the Reelfoot country, the lake, and crappie dinners at Boyette's, the best you ever ate; shacks, Negroes, share-croppers; brick high schools; contented little towns; and over all, in the summer, an atmosphere, a languor and intangible spirit which must be nameless here because it does not subject itself to description. Then the same region in rain-sodden winter, making it look so bleak and somber that you were filled with anguish. Burr-hided lank cows and mules, and poor whites and niggers going through the rain and cold wrapped in gunny sacks. I remember most of all the shacks and the poor. The heat and wet chill. The poverty and shadow of hunger.

Deep South: in its special way there is no other country like it. After all, both the romantic and realistic novelists have seen it truly and reported it accurately; for it's a land of paradox. But the real saga of it, in terms of commonplace middleclass, remains to be written. Maybe it never will. For it lacks color and drama. It's not photogenetic in technicolor.

William Faulkner and His Neighbors

PHIL STONE

"COUNT No Count" was the title by which he went in Oxford and at the University of Mississippi located here. His family was a noted one in this section of Mississippi beginning with his great-grandfather, William Cuthbert Faulkner— after whom he was named. The old man had been a prominent lawyer, had been a Colonel in the Confederate States Armies, had been politically influential, had built and operated a railroad, had traveled in Europe and had written a book about it, had written that news butch thriller "The White Rose of Memphis," had been a most energetic, versatile, and successful man —and had accumulated a fortune.

The grandfather of William Faulkner, J. W. T. Faulkner, had also been a successful lawyer and had founded and been president for years of the First National Bank of Oxford. Bill's uncle had been a Circuit Judge and a successful lawyer and a member of the Board of Trustees of the state institutions of higher learning. Bill's father was Secretary and Business Manager of the University of Mississippi.

But he was just "Count No Count." True, his grandfather gave him a job in the bank for a while but he soon quit that. True, he would occasionally do an odd job of house painting or paper-hanging or firing boilers. But he would work only a while and quit. True, too, it was said he wrote poetry and other things but none of them had ever been sold. He had an aristocratic, superior appearance—which most people considered an affectation—and an aloof reserve and an arrogant snappishness when someone tried to get familiar. So he was considered affected, peculiar, a crank, or a harmless ne'er-do-well. And thus he became "Count No Count."

The old families of Oxford tolerated him because, after all, he was a member of the Faulkner family. Also some of them had black sheep in their own families. But they did not invite him to their houses, as a rule, and my frequent statements that he was a writer of ability and would one day be more famous than Stark Young (another native son) and would cause many people to come to Oxford because it was the home of William Faulkner—such statements provoked guffaws from the general public and polite, derisive smiles from the old families.

Even when he actually got a book published, there was no apparent change. (Some years ago at a party a lady member of one of our most aristocratic families took pains to inform several groups with studied casualness that Bill had just given her an autographed copy of his latest book. I could not help but smile when I remembered that I still had at home her autographed presentation first edition copy of "The Marble Faun" for which I could not get her to pay a dollar and a half when it was published.) Even the publication of "Soldier's Pay," "Mosquitoes," "Sartoris," "Sound and Fury," and "As I Lay Dying" did not budge them much. To be sure some other people had then said that he had ability but still he obviously had made no money.

Then came "Sanctuary." At first there were horrified whispers, shocked surprise, and quick condemnation in Oxford. But all critics everywhere began to acclaim. Stories by Faulkner began to appear in the magazines. The movies began to seek him. The New York critics had praised him and he had made money! Therefore he must be a great writer after all.

David Cohn has asked me what the proletariat, the loafers around the courthouse, now think of William Faulkner. (David, of all people, should know that "proletariat" is not the word to describe these highly individualistic Southern white people.) Well, the common people don't think of William Faulkner at all unless they happen to see him. They don't read his books, they don't read books at all very often. And this may be the part of wisdom. When they think of him they think of him with respect, respect for the fact that he is articulate enough to write a whole book and for the fact he has made money. The few of the common people who know him well like him very much because he is a square, honorable, decent person, and because they sense that social position is of no moment whatever to him.

The aristocrats are somewhat in awe of him and somewhat silently uneasy in his presence and he is invited now to more homes than he goes. But they still faintly resent him and their awe and hospitality will vanish if he gets to be less famous and does not continue to make money. If he should completely lose out as a writer and should cease to be a commercial success and should begin to write in a new vein—and a greater one? Well, until the New York critics should say that his new writing was greater than his old and until he made a lot of money thereby any claims for him would again be met by polite, derisive smiles.

—*Hawkins*

William Faulkner used to be something of a black sheep in his home town.

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Andrew Jackson Higgins — Louisiana Big Man

HARNETT T. KANE

THIS may not have anything to do with literature, but—

The biggest man in Louisiana, on his way to becoming one of the biggest in the South, is, rather suddenly, Andrew Jackson Higgins of New Orleans.

He is the man who received and then lost (for the time being, anyway) the greatest shipbulding contract in world history. With Henry J. Kaiser of the West Coast, he has pioneered in spectacular fashion in the application of modern mass production to sea warfare—going to greater lengths than Kaiser, sometimes, in booting out traditional procedure. With Kaiser, he has shared recently in violent proceedings in Washington, proceedings growing out of an asserted lack of materials for full utilization of the war plants and war capacities of each individual.

Despite furious charges, appeals, investigations, hearings, interviews with the President, his $385,000,000 job is out. But Louisiana and the part of Washington that knows him aren't selling Higgins stock short. Some are ready to wager that he and his methods will be back with something. Meanwhile, he continues to push out lines of torpedo boats, tiny murder-and-run vessels for the Commandos, invasion ships—vessels whose speed, mosquito-size, and maneuverability are helping revolutionize warfare. Some $42,000,000 or so is coming his way this year.

He's not quite a standard figure, not quite a paragon, this Higgins. He's loud mouthed, loud-mannered, joyously profane and happy about it all, completely un-Southern if you think of Southerners as gentle-voiced, gentle-mannered julep drinkers. He'll drink your julep, but meanwhile he'll be telling you just what the God-damned hell he thinks about it, the manner of its preparation, and the world in general. Perhaps appropriately, he works in the most untypically southern of southern states, in the most un-southern of southern cities. Louisiana, as many have said, is on the edge of the South; and, it might be added, New Orleans is well on the edge of Louisiana. Higgins isn't a Southerner, or a Louisianian. He's a Middle-Westerner who adopted New Orleans about the time of the World War I, and has thrived on it, during most of the time since then.

He is red-faced, built like the former sawmill worker that he is, and Irish, from far back. Those who have had contact with him don't have to be reminded of that last fact. It comes out in more ways than one. (But he insists, with gestures, that he is an American. His father was editor, lawyer, and county judge of Columbus, Nebraska, before that an Indian battler and pioneer settler. His mother was a direct descendant of the Connor of Connaught, West Ireland, he of the rebellion of 1848.)

HE can be a hell-raiser, and he knows usually when it pays. Plain crankiness, the ability to create a stink at the right time, sometimes is known to work in Washington. No God-damned admiral is going to talk down A. J. Higgins. He has told them off, and he'll tell them off again. Once or twice, when secretaries were too icy, he pushed in and saw them, whether they wanted to see him or not.

When he wants a corner cut, in designing or execution of a design, he wants it cut; and he may stand by and watch that it's done, if he has to go without sleep for twenty-four hours. Orleanians still talk about the time when he decided he'd have to use a section of city streets, in the neighborhood of one of his plants, and in a hurry. He ordered the area roped off, put up lights, and got to work. Let the neighbors complain. That, perhaps, is what neighbors are for, especially if they are settled around a shipbuilding plant—on dry land. For a while, too, New Orleans had to get used to the sight of great Higgins boats (great-sized, that is, in relation to things about them) as they moved through main streets on trucks, blocking traffic as they went. Higgins couldn't see why water had to be at a shipbuilding plant. He built 'em, moved 'em to river or lake, and dumped 'em in. In time, he applied his determination to bigger things, to the Liberty fleet. There was no reason why he still couldn't use his assembly-line-for-ships scheme, was there? He gave himself the answer he wanted, and got to work to put down a series of keels at one time, rolling them along the assembly line, installing parts en route. Loving craftsmanship . . . building of a vessel "the right way," bit by bit from the bottom . . .

—*International News*

Andrew Jackson Higgins and son Frank carry their story right to the door of the White House. Higgins arranged a conference with the President in an effort to obtain support for his plan to convert his shipyards to mass production of giant flying boats.

Higgins said Hell, and went ahead.

Born fifty-six years ago, he started "fooling around" with boats, sailing, and ice boats, as a boy. He attended a Jesuit college, didn't finish, went to work in lumber yards, saved some little money, did some trading and, in his teens, bought a lumber tract in Alabama, moved there, and opened a sawmill. On a shoestring, he rebuilt an old boat and started sending stuff to Latin America. The business prospered, increased rapidly. In 1915, he saw that nearby New Orleans was a better trade center, and shifted. Soon he was becoming one of the biggest owners of sailing craft in the American registry; "lumber and export business" was his line. He found he needed tugs and barges, and built them himself. He became more and more interested in ships. Others came to him to ask him to build for them, and he did.

Army engineers, oil companies, and others found needs for special kinds of boats, that could cross Louisiana swamps, bayous, and shallow beaches.

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He worked over designs and perfected them, for fast, tricky things that could "turn on a dime," and "float on the dew of a lily pad." Gentlemen whom he and others suspected were rum runners heard of these wonders, and asked for some. Government agents, chasing the runners, had to keep up with them, and asked, too, and received. In time Higgins the shipbuilder outdistanced Higgins the lumber and export man. He invented or sponsored new devices, new designs, new boat tricks. He had his financial ups and downs, went through several depressions, "paid every cent on the dollar," and survived. Came the war, and other governments, and then the United States, turned to him. The vessels that had conquered the swamps could operate on any uncertain terrain; and Higgins's star rose to a new high point.

Once he had landed, broke, in a Southern city, his possessions 15 cents and a mandolin which he hocked. Since then, he has dealt usually in big money, in big-time schemes. Today, while he does war work, he keeps his eye on something else: a scheme that he has evolved for truck-boat transportation to open South America, a "trade oyster" for the United States, in Higgins's words. He sees his boats servicing a streamlined world trade, rather than Nazis and Japs, once things quiet down. Meanwhile he goes on raising hell and records.

OF late, he has been moving around in new waters. He attended the Southern Conference for Human Welfare with a group of AFL friends, and stood on the platform with Mrs. Higgins. He made a talk about the rights of the Negroes. (He has spoken of plans for "tapping this great reservoir of Southern labor.") The First Lady called him one of the most enlightened of business men. Higgins likes her: "She's my buddy." He notes that he has always paid standard wages. But he coins a word, and says he doesn't like things and people that are "ismistic." As an efficiency man, he will admit the value of vertical unionism, but is inclined to regard the CIO as too militant. When four machinists protested to the NLRB that they had been fired for union activity, the board discussed the matter with him, only to find that he had meanwhile installed AFL unions and that all seemed one happy family. Everybody belonged to the AFL, though some might not know it. He's a paternalist; he'll watch out for the boys.

He has things organized for efficiency at the top, as well. At head offices, he has a room for the brain men. A group of experts, inventors, technicians, and such, sit around all day and think, tell A. J. what they're doing from time to time, get orders, and produce. They produce, all right. Everybody around Higgins produces, including the four Higgins sons, all in the business. Higgins will tell, with a chuckle, how he sometimes makes sure that one of the boys, an excellent mathematician, will concentrate on a problem. He gives him a fatherly talk, a message of uplift, then closes the door and stands guard outside, for the day, or the night as well. Nobody gets in or out, until the job is done.

Like other Irishmen, Higgins is as sentimental as he's hardy. The four Higgins sons are full grown, making their own way. Whenever Papa goes on a trip, or whenever a special occasion arises, they kiss him goodbye, the way they always did. "Why the hell not?" asks Papa. He can be expansive after dinner, and he can tell a good story. But before long, he'll probably be on the subject of one of his pet hates, theoretical or otherwise. Currently, it's that "Godawful War Production Board." "Self seeking men with big incomes," he has called the members, and he has said strong things about the closing of his plant: "I know now why France fell . . . They've hung crepe on the biggest thing in Louisiana." What's behind it, he asks? He answers: Big steel, big interests of the East, alarmed that he was given a contract to produce as many ships as the rest of America's shipyards combined; afraid that New Orleans, and Higgins, and the South, would get a place beside them in America's present and future industry. Maritime commission men said that, since a big plant had to be constructed below New Orleans, with ships not to start pouring out until 1943, the ship cost was too high, higher than at other places, and therefore the Higgins contract had to go. "Hell," snorted Higgins, and allowed that it was simply a question of too many people being frightened that Higgins methods would work; that he could show how a lot of ships could be built at a cost that will hit an all-time low.

HE says he likes the sea-going Navy boys, that he can "get along with, and together with, anybody that handles the ships." For those in Washington—he says that red tape is in their hair and in their blood; and he likes nothing better than to swing an axe at red tape. "Those babies . . ." he says of the dollar a year men, and goes on from there.

At any rate, he's a New Man of the New South, a force to be contended with, war or peace. He's realistic, self-made and self-sure, shrewd, sentimental, and determined to get whatever he's after. He's the kind of man who will have much to say about the South during the coming reconstruction. You can take him or leave him, as you wish. But you can guess that he won't be left.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

This bouquet of quotations about roses is the offering of Mrs. Mary Atwater Taylor, of New York City. Can you tie up each quotation with the poet who wrote it? Six correct answers is par, 7 or 8 is good, and 9 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 29.

1. A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.
   All tenderly his messenger he chose;
   Deep-hearted, pure, with scented dew still wet—
   One perfect rose.
2. The rose looks fair, but fairer it we deem
   For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
3. The rainbow comes and goes
   And lovely is the rose.
4. You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
   But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.
5. Strew on her roses, roses,
   And never a spray of yew. . . .
6. . . . . never blows so red
   The rose as where some buried Caesar bled.
7. Oh, my luve is like a red, red rose
   That's newly sprung in June. . . .
8. Of all mankind you should not flout us;
   What can a Poet do without us?
   In every love-song roses bloom;
   We lend you colour and perfume.
9. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
   Old Time is still a-flying.
10. I sent thee late a rose wreath. . . .

( ) Matthew Arnold
( ) Robert Burns
( ) Edward Fitzgerald
( ) John Gay
( ) Robert Herrick
( ) Ben Jonson
( ) Thomas Moore
( ) Dorothy Parker
( ) Shakespeare
( ) William Wordsworth

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Book Reviewing in the Deep South

JENNIE GARDNER

EVERY informed person in our country knows about the bumper crop of southern novelists in this generation, but nobody knows anything about southern book reviewers. This goes for southern reviewers themselves, who are connoisseurs of Faulkner, O'Donnell, Rawlings, and the rest, but who never heard tell of each other. "Why should I bother to read minor critics," asks one of these, "when I'm trying my best not to be one myself?" That seems to explain the situation.

Another reason for the separateness of various literary editors in the Deep South is that the poor harried creatures don't have time for such nonessential activities as keeping up with their neighbors. They're too busy begging New York publishers to send them something besides Faith Baldwin, and coaxing local literates to work for them without prospect of gold or silver. Their job is usually an uphill struggle on a steep grade, cowed as they are by dark looks from the business manager of their paper (man who is supersensitive to advertising space), and generally rated in importance along with the Society Department's third assistant.

Significance of this disorganization lies in the fact that southern literary editors are definitely not section conscious. "Look Away Dixieland" is their motto, and their minds live in New York and Boston while their feet tread Magnolia Lane. There's little stress on regional problems or regional history. (And this is too bad.) There's little fretting over mud falling on Alabama in a recent novel. (And this is fine.) "Significance" isn't too big a word to use here, because a million and a half subscribers take Deep South newspapers that carry book reviews regularly. Consider only seven or eight per cent of these and their families as review readers, and you see that the influence of reviews on the mind of the South can be considerable.

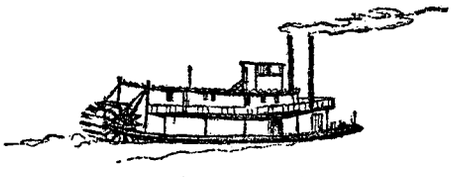
A word about the quality of the reviews, which is all tied up with the quality of their audience. I made a little survey of space allotted to books in southern papers, and harvested a number of letters from editors. A most remarkable reply bounced from the managing editor of a middle-sized paper in Florida. He says: "We do not have a book review feature . . . There are many reasons for this . . . but the principal reason is the poor class of literature that is now being published. It seems a best seller must have a certain amount of 'filth' to get by."

This gentleman, no doubt a Bulwer-Lytton fan, is the lone exception among the southern newspaper people I addressed—the only exquisitely *gentle man* in the crowd. But his attitude represents no small fraction of the reading public in this section, which still carries the torch for the genteel tradition. Then there are those whose idea of a burning issue is the strategy of the siege of Vicksburg. And those whose culture is of the sewing-and-book-club variety, who hold with the old southern tradition of books simply as ornaments to leisure. With such readers making up a large part of its audience, it's no wonder that southern criticism is rather geared down, and has to lag behind the famous southern fiction, which has a different reader demand. There's little market for any deep criticism in the Deep South, and consequently, as criticism, our reviews are vastly unimportant.

Another limitation that seems to cramp the reviews is the old southern politeness of most reviewers, who aren't influenced by advertising but who are so earnestly anxious to attract readers that they butter all their reports with unnecessary kindness.

In spite of all of which, the reports are as a rule fine from the news angle. They are intelligent, and, on the whole, are excellently written.

Leaders in the section are: *The Times Picayune of New Orleans, The Atlanta Journal, The Atlanta Constitution, Savannah Morning News, The Birmingham Age News Herald,* and *The Montgomery Advertiser.* Less than pages but good coverages are to be found in *The Herald* of Miami, *The Augusta Chronicle,* and *The Macon Telegraph.*



—From "Steamboat 'Round the Bend," by Ben Lucien Burman.

Savannah Morning News deserves the loudest hurrahs when you consider the small size of the paper operating in a town of less than 100,000. An entire page goes to news of books that are well chosen. Its reviews are discriminating, and the page is well made up to rank alongside the top *Times Picayune* page.

FIVE of these nine leaders are in Georgia. Atlanta is, of course, center of this reader rookery, and that city, led by the *Atlanta Journal,* carries on the traditions of the late Frances Newman, shining light for southern literary journalists.

Mississippians are adequately informed on Dick Tracy, Sports, and Society, by state papers, but read their book news in Memphis and New Orleans papers.

Memphis, vortex of the river delta, is at the shallow top of the Deep South. Technically in Tennessee, but belonging to Mississippi and Arkansas as well, it's an undecided city. It cherishes the hoof-prints of Forrest's cavalry and the marks of midwestern commercialism equally. So I'm not sure that my experience in Memphis, as book page editor of *The Commercial Appeal,* is typical of the Deep South. But it seems to parallel other situations. According to my canvass, all the main southern papers, with only one exception, are expanding or at least maintaining their book news space.

In our town, the full book page has run for six years—a record here—and with an expanding audience if reader mail is the gauge. Forty per cent more books were sold through the local wholesale dealer in 1941 than in 1929. "Lanterns on the Levee" found 2,310 customers here, while "So Red the Rose," seven years before, had only 1,335. Local bookstores have doubled in number in the last five years. (Now we are six.) And they all keep our book page on tap to facilitate orders. The local rental library magnate is witness to the book page's influence in bettering the taste of his customers. Now that our constituents have been writing for fifteen years, in a renascence of literary production surpassing even Reconstruction times, it looks as if they're also commencing to read.

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Gilgo Slade of Louisiana

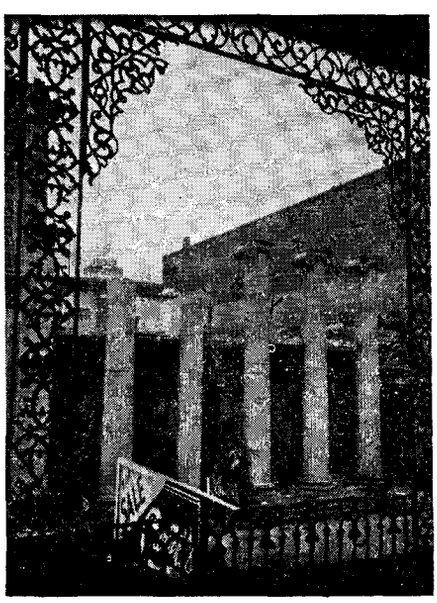
SUN IN CAPRICORN. By Hamilton Basso. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1942. 266 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GWEN BRISTOW

THIS is the story of how a power-mad politician undertook to wreck the lives of two young lovers because doing so would help smear an opponent who stood in the way of his ambition to be President.

The scene is Louisiana, the time is the nineteen-twenties, and the protagonist is modeled upon Huey Long. There is no attempt to disguise the last fact; Hamilton Basso is a newspaper man of many years' experience, and he uses all his reportorial skill to recreate what he observed of the fantastic atmosphere in which Mr. Long used to get himself elected. He writes so vividly that nobody who remembers those wild campaigns can read these descriptions without a reminiscent shiver. In the book, the name of the governor of Louisiana is Gilgo Slade. While the incident on which the story is based is probably imaginary, and rather naive, the scenes in which Slade himself appears have, as the fictitious narrator expresses it, an "authentic incredibility."

To be sure, this is fiction and not biography. It would be difficult to give a full portrait of so complex a character as Huey Long in so brief a novel, and Mr. Basso makes no attempt to do so. Ignoring the brilliant intellect and vast legal erudition of his model, he presents only the most obvious of Long's many aspects: his personal magnetism, his genius for self-dramatization, his lust for power, and his ability to convince most of his countrymen that he was no more than a noisy hillbilly clown, to be laughed with or at, but preferably with.



—From "New Orleans and Its Living Past," by David L. Cohn and C. J. Laughlin.

Three civilizations—a New Orleans portrait.

There is no subtlety in this delineation. We are told that Gilgo Slade became governor after a three-cornered race in which he rolled up such a large plurality that the second candidate thought it wiser to withdraw than submit to a runoff (which was what happened in Long's case); that he "held a national cornpone and pot-likker contest, the year he met the Spanish Ambassador in a pair of tan shorts and a tan undershirt"; that he had a nose readily caricatured; and some of the minor figures around the governor are scarcely disguised at all. When we read of Mr. Abe Shoeman, the china-and-glass man, now Commissioner of Conservation; of Faber Meyerhold, treasurer of Slade's organization, who used to be a barber; and of Joe Piscatti, the bodyguard standing behind the great man's chair with a tommy-gun, we feel pleasantly or unpleasantly at home, depending on our own memories of those days.

With all these frank details, it is hard to understand why Mr. Basso should be so vague about the fictitious part of his book. The narrator says he lives in Montrose Parish, and there isn't any such place. His name is Hazzard and his girl friend's name is Erin, but they have no surnames, and neither has his uncle, Slade's political opponent. These characters themselves are types rather than individuals. Possibly this underemphasis is purposeful, to give the book entirely to Slade. This, at any rate, is the effect. Mr. Basso can write forcefully—the sights, noises, and odors of New Orleans and the Louisiana countryside are there all the time. We can smell the wharfs and hear the violent subtropical rain gurgling in the gutters; when he says the river on a summer night looks like gelatin he is exactly right; and when, on the romantic shore of Lake Pontchartrain, he interrupts a lover's declaration with the jabbing of mosquitoes he's not being funny. The scene where Slade receives his admirers in his hotel suite, and the political rally that climaxes the narrative, are both excellent.

It's not all as good as this. When the young man meets the girl and falls in love with her, Mr. Basso seems to get embarrassed about the whole business. Like a flustered speechmaker, he says the same things over and over till the audience gets embarrassed too. At their first meeting, the narrator asks the girl a question and then says, "She nodded her chin." A little later, he observes, "She made a small non-committal sound." A few pages further on he describes her smile by saying "She crinkled her nose at me." Apparently he liked these sentences. For he keeps repeating their phrases. The girl's nodding chin, her crinkling nose, and her small sounds get so monotonous that the reader is happy to get back to Slade and his evil but interesting behavior.

When Hamilton Basso says mosquitoes interrupt a lover's declaration, he isn't being funny.

For the picture of Slade is a good job. It is effective because Mr. Basso conveys the particular characteristic of Slade's original that caused thousands of men and women to regard him, no matter what he did, with a mystical devotion. The first time the narrator sees Slade, he records, "I realized there was a secret to him that the cameras did not catch." If he is remembering Huey Long, he is certainly right. You can call this quality by any name you choose, but you will not describe it. You simply feel aware of a tremendous personality whenever its possessor enters the room. Mr. Basso calls it energy, and a "supercharge of vitality." In the last chapter, describing Slade's mastery of a crowd, he refers to it as "throttled violence," and adds, "I thought of all the cartoons I'd seen of him, and how comical he was supposed to be, but he did not look comical. The charge of repressed frenzy that went into his salute to the crowd was not comical. Nothing about him was comical. It came to me that too many people had thought he was comical too long."

European refugees who have fled from the terror overseas tell us that this can also be said about Hitler.

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The Color of New Orleans

THE PORT OF NEW ORLEANS. By Harold Sinclair. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1942. 335 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by ALBERT GOLDSTEIN

BOOKS about New Orleans, says Mr. Sinclair in this eye-opening chronicle, fall as a rule into one of two categories: those whose writers dwell "almost lovingly" on the city's iniquities, and those which are written to emphasize what he calls its unreal and pseudo-romantic trappings. Faintly scornful of these methods, he admits, nevertheless, that, New Orleans being what it is, there is something to be said for both of them. So, instead of throwing them out, he neatly combines them and, in his own approach, offers a very competent job in its field.

Although this new volume is one in the publishers' "Seaport Series," the prospective reader need not be suspicious of tedious statistics covering tides or tonnage, flood stages, or foreign trade. As a matter of fact, while the book is "slanted" to the city's record as one of the world's great seaports, the bulk of his account is merely an informal and often lively picture of the place and the people, with a subjective overtone that gives it a vitality ordinarily not found in books of this type.

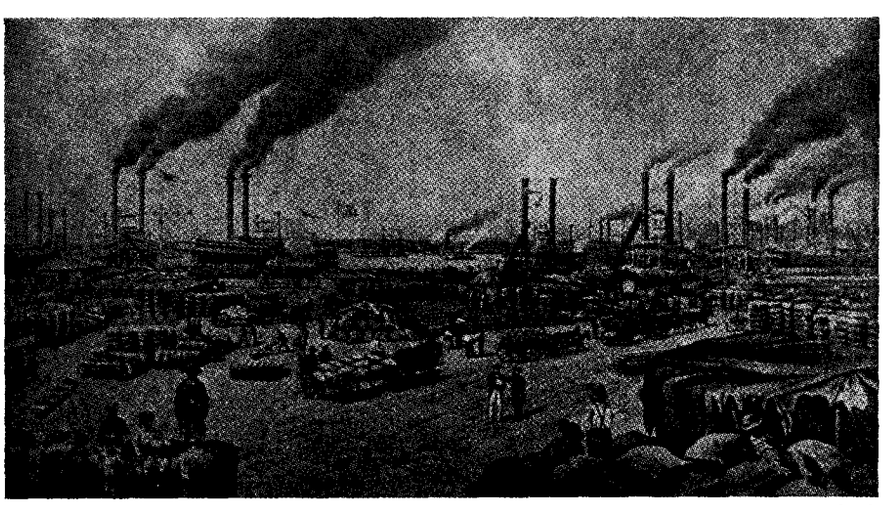
As I see it, the first half of the book —excepting principally an excellent, impartial treatment of Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812—is less interesting and less revealing than the second half. Indeed, a good deal of this section is slightly over on the dull side; the Colonial and early American aspects of New Orleans's history is a well weeded field, and most of the material which Mr. Sinclair handles here is neither fresh nor susceptible to a brand new approach.

But in the second half he finds his stride. Here he shows himself to be a painstaking historian and a keen reporter, and here, too, is his most successful performance in draining off the nonsense of legend and recorded fact which always has attached itself to the New Orleans story.

I suspect that what has interested Mr. Sinclair most about New Orleans —apart from its strictly political and economic history—is its relationship, down the years, to vice and shady politics; its un-American backwardness; its "color" (rather than its much touted "charm"); its native speech; its anomalous architecture; its climate (which he blames for many of its shortcomings); and the never quite explainable fact that "in a sense she is the living heart of the Deep South, yet in many ways she is hardly as Southern as Evansville, Indiana." In his investigation of such ideas he is at his best. Some of his judgments, I believe, are a bit harsh, and some of his attempts at exposé do not quite come off; but I find that I never am inclined to question his honesty.

Underneath the rather conventional shell of this work the reader will discover no end of items to stir his imagination. The portion which describes the Federal occupation of New Orleans in the Civil War, together with its estimate of General Benjamin Butler, commander of the occupying forces, who, from the author's viewpoint, was not as black as historians have painted him, is especially revealing. Significant, and timely, too, is the chapter on the modern port—an informative statement which nicely sidesteps the familiar chamber-of-commerce humbug. Not to be overlooked are the three or four pages on street names—a phenomenon typical of the city. And the final chapter, summing up New Orleans of today, is an original, subjective treatment.

I think that what Mr. Sinclair has attempted in this book—and what he has accomplished with marked success, is the writing of a realistic account. Not that the "charm," so overworked by boosters and tourist guides, has left him cold; to the contrary, he has been consistently impressed and often delighted by this city of strange habits and fantastic contrasts. But he has preferred, he says, to leave its moth-eaten legends "undisturbed in the pages of other, and perhaps better writers."



—*From the book*

Wharf scene of the Port of New Orleans, 1883.

Deep South, 1942

John Gould Fletcher

JULY, and cotton-chopping time is over,
There is room to doze on the porch, to sit, to dream;
The sun is a gold hawk hovering above us,
Day glides like a lost boat that drifts down a wide stream.
The hound-dogs drowse, picturing distant squirrels,

The people sleep, unwitting of dark wrong.
Like a lazy fish snapping at a fly in the current,
Comes now a far-off song.

Under the moon the rabbits scamper;
All things come either late or all too soon.
And the frogs from the cypress-swamp keep up their chorus
Under the golden bubble of the moon.

July, and ancient memories prick and haunt us,
Like the whippoorwill heard calling from the hill;
The screaming of the shells, stark starving Vicksburg,
Or Chickamauga's bloody and craggy rill.
After Argonne, again the hail of battle,

Heard distant through the thunder-words we scan;
Moving through mist, winged riders meet the onset,
From Egypt to Port Darwin, from Iceland to Japan.

Under the moon, the hymn swells from the campground;
Many things come through effort; too few are given soon.
And the breast of the great stream gleams with pale bodiless silver
Under the moving bubble of the moon.

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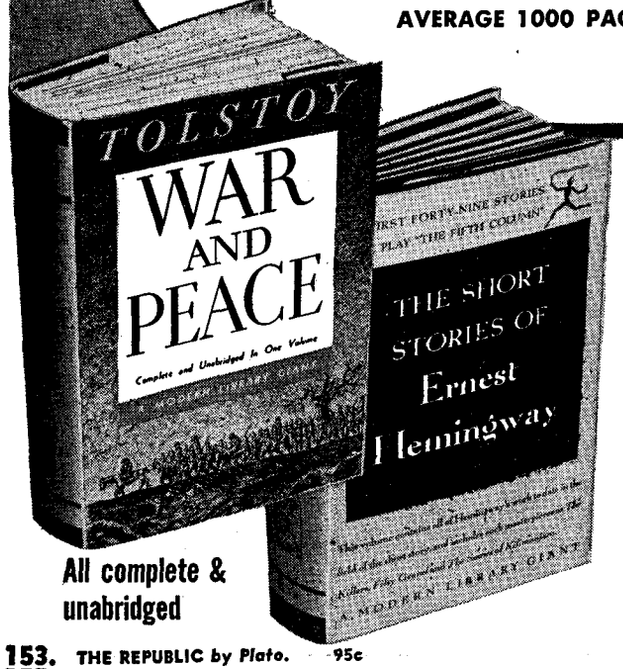

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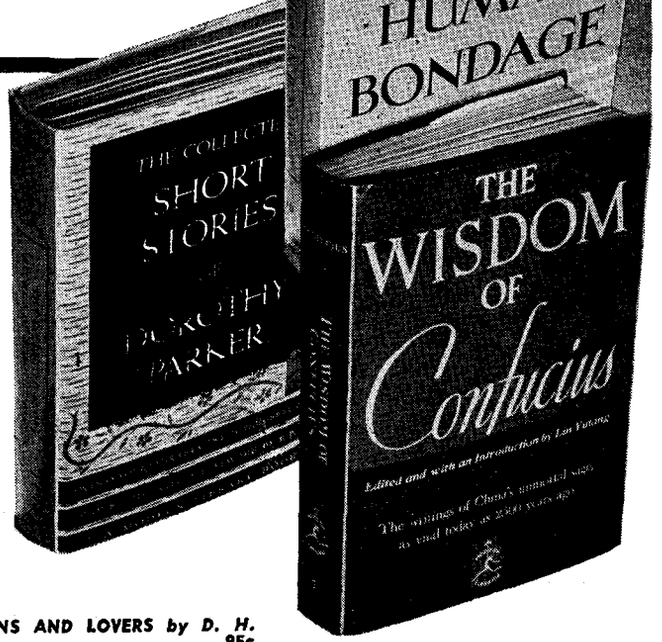

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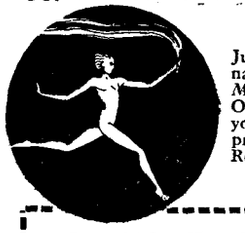

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Out of the Cyprus Swamps

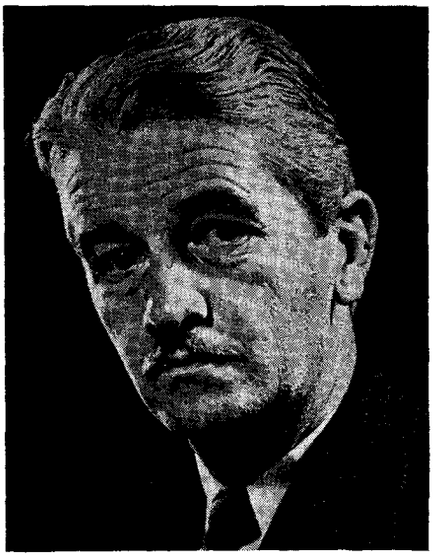
DOLLAR COTTON. By John Faulkner. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1942. 306 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES

"YOU cain't talk about growing things to folks that ain't never growed nothing," says old man Town at the end of this book when dollar cotton is down to fifteen cents and he is a ruined old man in a ruined Mississippi Delta. But John Faulkner manages some vivid talk about growing things, and dying ones, too, and the talk is as entertaining and important for those who have never grown anything as for those who have. This second novel by William Faulkner's younger brother has the merit of telling a story directly and well and creating two characters magnificently. One is Otis Town, who comes from the hill country to clear a cotton field for himself bare-handedly in the cyprus swamps, and whose stubbornness, patience, and bitter hard work make him a millionaire at last in dollar cotton and rich black earth. The other is Mammy, the Negro woman who bears him a son in the first days of man-against-nature in the swamps, and whose total humility, loyalty, cheerfulness, and objectivity through the changing years are a monument to the best qualities of her race. The miscegenation in this story is treated in Mark Twain's way rather than in that of the author's famous brother William. It is something in the life of the principal character, not a troubled thing for a whole people.

There are conventionalities and insufficiencies about this book, and pages which do not convince. There is a lynching much like hundreds of others in hundreds of other books about the South, suggesting an unhappy adherence on the author's part to a style no longer faithful, since lynching is practically extinct (there have been two this year, where once there were more than two hundred). The drunken-driving son, Van, is synthetic, and so are Otis Town's wife and daughters. And you have a feeling that some of the depravities, frustrations, and morbidities brought in are more related to the author's idea of what should be in a book about the South than to his creative nature.

For John Faulkner is a "robust." He could not have made old man Town come alive in this book if he were not, if he did not have a taste for sturdiness, deep health, and the deathless, successful business of man with nature. It is as a "robust" that he means something to the literature of his country's present time and of peace times afterwards when an American people who went into this war sick, effeminate, and psychopathic must turn masculine again and a little primitive if they want to survive as democrats.



John Faulkner

—*Wanamaker*

Mary Medearis

Community Roots in Arkansas

BIG DOC'S GIRL. By Mary Medearis. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1942. 271 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

HERE is another novel, and a good one, to add to the great number of recent works of fiction in which the virtues of village and country life have been vigorously defended, just two decades after the audacious revolt from the village inaugurated by Edgar Lee Masters, Sherwood Anderson, and Sinclair Lewis. For years after "Spoon River Anthology" and "Winesburg, Ohio" the hypocrisy and the stultifying dullness of village life were favorite themes of the smart novelist. Recently, however, there has been a joyous rediscovering of America, and a growing conviction that the real America is equidistant from Washington and Times Square—in the rich farmlands of Iowa, the Missouri hills, the college towns of Nebraska, the independent New England villages, and hundreds of other places. And an American culture has been found here, not glittering but sound.

"Big Doc's Girl," a first novel by Mary Medearis, has as its locale the somewhat primitive back country of the author's native Arkansas.

> The back country of Arkansas is always the same, no matter which fork of the road you follow. Always the narrow, rutted wagon road winds through thick woods of pine and scrub oak and sumac bushes; always past green and white cotton fields, tall waves of whispering corn—down the same valley, up the same hill, in at the same gate and along the path to the weary, rain-grayed farmhouse.

A cultured family living in a small town learn to love the land and its simple people, who are unschooled but not stupid, crude but gentle, possessing a spontaneous, generous community spirit that would shame the synthetic enthusiasms of any Chamber of Commerce. They have a sort of heroic greatness as well, and face their privations and tragedies with manliness and dignity.

The story is simplicity itself. A country doctor devoted to science, Shakespeare, and people, refuses a lucrative position in the State Medical School, preferring to serve his community. His music-loving daughter rejects a well-to-do suitor with conventional standards of success and loses a chance to study at a great conservatory, in order that she may give organ lessons to simple backwoods folk to whom music is food for the soul, not a social accomplishment. Trusting her instincts and common sense, she redefines for herself "ambition" and "success in life" in her search for happiness. This short novel is well written, warm, and moving in its sincerity; and it successfully avoids the too highly mannered simplicity of some young writers of the *Story* school.

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Two Home Towns

SMALL TOWN SOUTH. By Sam Byrd. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1942. 237 *pp.* $2.75.

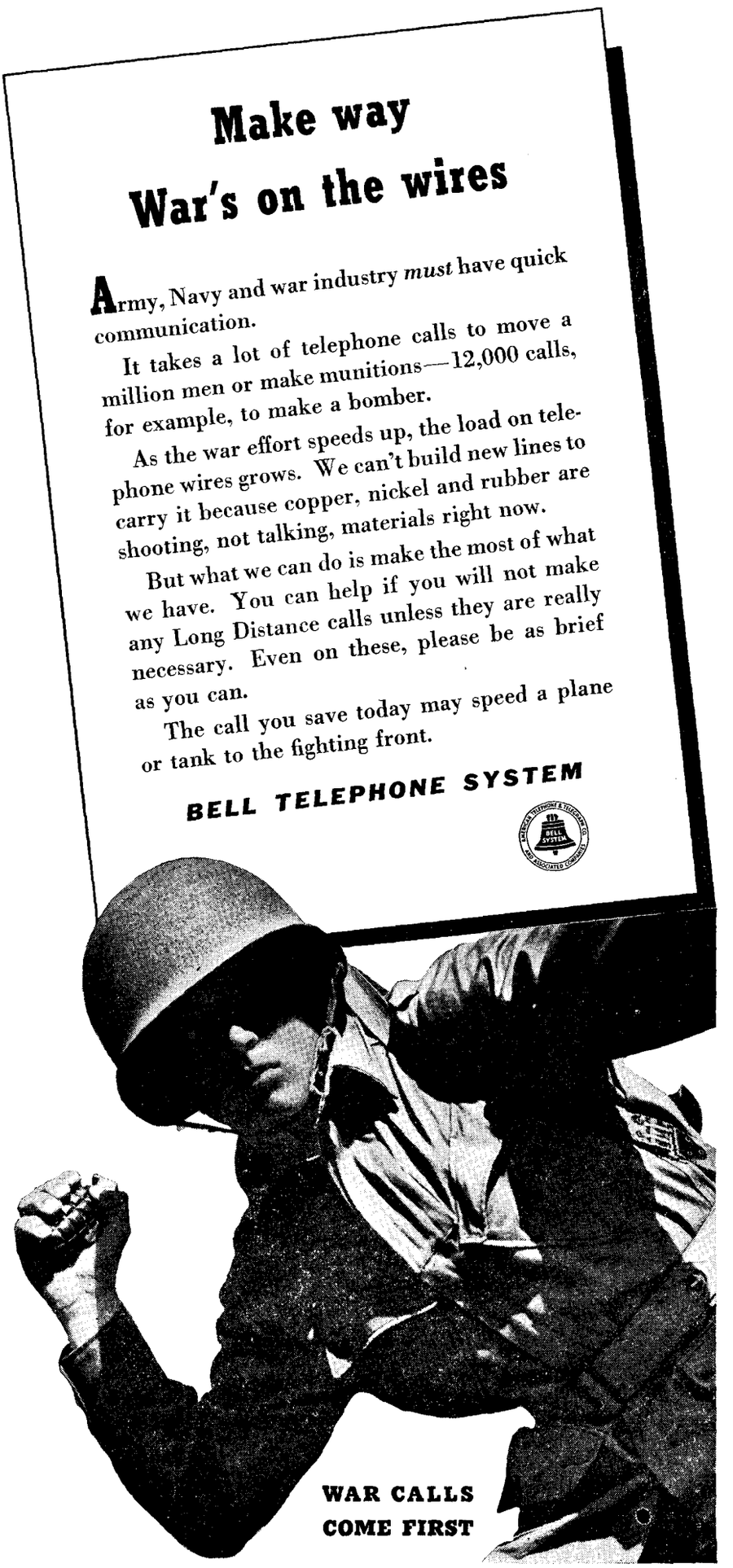
Reviewed by JOHN TEMPLE GRAVES

AFTER eleven hundred and fifty-one consecutive appearances as Dude Lester in "Tobacco Road," Mr. Byrd writes this book about his two home towns—one in the played-out strawberry country of North Carolina, the other in the played-out celery country of Florida. In some respects the book is an eleven hundred and fifty-second performance, for the miseries, lewdities, and depravities of mankind are staged through 237 very readable pages. A psychoanalyst might say that this is exactly the sort of book to be expected of a man who had played a leading part in "Tobacco Road" if he had talent and sensibility.

In Chapter Two, which Sam Byrd calls "I Look for the Lesters," the author tells of a tour through the country vicinities of his North Carolina home town, where poverty had followed the removal of the strawberry center to an area thirty miles away, and how he found people living very much as Mr. Caldwell had said they lived in Georgia. That he should feel the need of this vindication after the 1151 consecutive performances, is something else on which the psychoanalysts might comment.

Partly because of the story behind the man who writes it and partly because of the talent and subject matter of the writer, this book reads itself. With one case history after another of poverty, sickness, debauchery, scoundrelism, human weakness, human kindness, human endurance, in North Carolina during the New Deal, in Florida after the insane real estate boom, the book hangs together because the story teller is among those present, and you can't help liking him. The small town in Florida is no more southern than it is Yankee, and since more than half the book is about it the title is misleading. But the nice thing about Sam Byrd, who has gone off now for service in the Navy, is that he isn't trying to prove anything about any place, and that he doesn't even damn anybody. He just has a feeling for human beings and apparently knows how to make a good stage for them.

And if you told him that, in spite of all he sees and reports, there is such a thing as a happy South and a robust South, he would admit it, I think. Sunlight is in his book, and the immortality of things out-doors. Where those are, all is not lost.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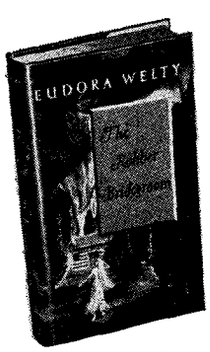

To be published October 23. $2.

THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM

by Eudora Welty

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

The Life of a Southern Town

BUT YOU'LL BE BACK. By Marguerite Steedman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1942. 356 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by EUDORA WELTY

THIS novel is about a little Georgia town cut off from life by the new highway's leaving it away to one side; and how Miss Cora, the maiden lady in the big house, contrives in one mounting flight of inspiration and ingenuity to get its life back by the homely way of putting every talent in the place to work. It is the account of a great burst of energy out of one character. Out of Miss Cora's energy, everybody cans, preserves, weaves, carves, serves dinners, and hands out flowers to tourists. Miss Cora loves the town, but she does the good deeds also because the hero, in love with her niece, has left Thessaly in time-honored disgust saying it is no town for ambition to flower in, that place being New York. It is to bring Peter back by refuting this (in some kind of maiden-aunt logic) and bestowing him on the languishing niece that Miss Cora schemes over the town and that the town is infected by her ambition and works busily under the spell and accomplishes a great list of things.

This is mostly a novel about things —wanting things, getting things, losing things, stealing and selling things, and getting better things. It does not go very inquisitively into human emotions, touching only the feelings of enterprise that things and their getting can inspire. It is to the detriment of this novel that enterprise is not revealing behavior, in fact it is often the farthest thing from it. At its most ambitious and at its best, the book sets out to be the panoramic story of a town, its threatened life, its death by ruin and fire, and its dramatic renascence. The human story, the emotional story in this panorama, is touched in a vague hovering way, while the success story of getting houses, food, and a man for the girl, is told meticulously and with zest.

The author knows her little towns and is quite sure in her casual observations and in the lighter anecdotes of that life. She knows the South, obviously, and she has a nice habit of good humor. But when the time comes, as it should, to look through the outside of this life to the inside, she backs away.

Several deficiencies might come from its being a first novel. The plot is an account of manipulations instead of a study of human motives. There is no interplay of character, only a one-way effect of an omnipotent Aunt Cora on the others. For this reason there is little human interest in what Aunt Cora accomplishes and no suspense or doubt about the accomplishment. The other characters are just so many stops for Aunt Cora to pull out in her solo performance. She is able to cast such a strong spell over the population that even the town siren begins to cry and borrows a car in order to ride clear away from the hero. It is too bad that the story has to take its root out of a problem of young and unnourished love. This love affair, between Peter the young architect and the niece, cannot be much support when the heroine is asleep (alone) for most of the first eighty pages and the hero takes the train (offstage) to New York on page ninety-six without even telling her goodbye or appearing for one scene with her, and stays till the end of the book. He doesn't even write. One is told that they are in love, but one likes to make up his own mind. Since Marion herself is an unprotesting if pretty young being and makes few remarks, one decides that all this weaving and preserving should be done for the town, but not for Marion.

The jacket advertises the book's characters as "Normal Southern" people, which is a jolting phrase, and one hopes does not indicate that hereafter southern people are to be sub-divided after having already been divided from the rest of the country. This is not to say that Miss Steedman has not touched a relatively fresh field for she takes a whole little town indiscriminately into her story and includes everybody, many "nice people." Her trouble is not stock horror-characters, but stock sentimental characters, for whom "normal" may be the publisher's euphemism. There are the

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Marguerite Steedman

standby creatures, of North and South alike—the little crippled boy who is a genius, the mean old miser, the gamey Civil War general, the long-haired poet, and the treasure of a cook, etc. Miss Steedman is direct in her homely observations, but she does not look with such careful eyes at the things that better require the clear penetration; she notes exactly and well "the sweetish odor of mud on which the sun shines," but when she describes pity or love she contents herself with an old cliché. The description of the fire and the ruined town is good and is the most realistic thing in the book. But about emotion and character one can also be noticing and explicit. The charity and duty described are not emotions, ingenuity is not a force like passion, and though this book deals with charity, duty, and ingenuity, and faith too of a kind, these things cannot come really alive without a more vital breath breathed through them. The author herself has not been emotionally affected by her ethical ideas, one feels. She is sure of them, often enthusiastic, sometimes sentimental, but not possessed. She is actuated by something less and something lighter than emotion, the development of a bright idea. The writing is energetic if not very distinguished, and is done with ease. Ease has permitted carelessness at times, and there are smudgy traces of journalism in an occasional absurdity of phrase and now and then a veil of sheerest hokum falls over the page. Her thesis that no little town need die is laudable and full of interest, but the mind and heart and spirit of the town that would prove this thesis and rise above it are not examined. A glimpse at the town's real core of feeling and a timid hint of imagination are in the last chapter or so, but much more could have been made of the town's story and its overtones of medieval pride and joy in its work.

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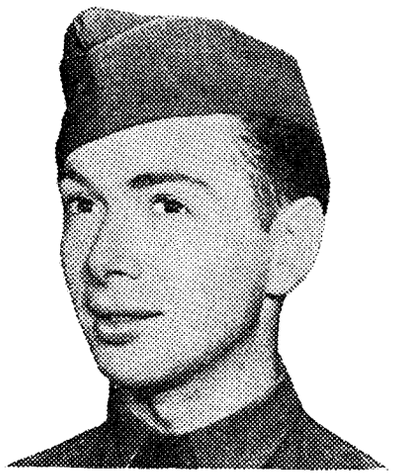

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Negro Music on the Georgia Islands

SLAVE SONGS OF THE GEORGIA SEA ISLANDS. By Lydia Parrish. Music transcribed by Creighton Churchill and Robert MacGimsey. Introduction by Olin Downes. New York: Creative Age Press. 1942. 256 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by HAROLD COURLANDER

MRS. LYDIA (Maxwell) PARRISH has writen a romantic account of Negro music in the Georgia Sea Islands. Moved by a spirit of eagerness to learn more and more about the origins of the slave songs that are today all but forgotten, and to pass on the results of her observations, she encouraged the old people of St. Simon, Sapelo, and other islands to sing for her and to talk about the old times before the big "Raid." "Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands" contains a selection from her personal treasury of transcriptions and a chatty, rambling account of the people who sang for her. She is passionately fond of discovering what she supposes has heretofore passed unnoticed, of tracing themes back to ante bellum and African days, and of making a racial epic of her material. Her prodigious efforts to record old songs are imbued with the free spirit of the amateur. She founded societies among the Negroes of the Islands to perpetuate their folk music, and subsidized their singing. One cannot but be impressed by the tremendous pleasure that must have attended her twenty-five years of collecting.

Many of the songs in the book are old and bear the marks of African influences. They are worth saving, and we are indebted to Mrs. Parrish for having kept them alive.

Despite the rightness of Mrs. Parrish's enthusiasm for her work, it is nevertheless important to point out that the explanatory matter is largely overwritten and studded with little straw men that she is constantly flicking down with her little finger. In a general way her evidence for African provenience of certain American Negro culture traits is already familiar matter, and she does not use it as skilfully she she might, even as an amateur. "Drums and Shadows," written by the Georgia Writers' Project and published in 1940, deals with the same region, much of the same evidence, and with some of the identical informants used by Mrs. Parrish, though it is unlisted in her bibliography; although it pretends to be nothing more than a survey of old people of the Georgia coast and their memories, it has a kind of adequacy and completeness not to be found in this present volume.

Even though she emphasizes her northern Quaker origin, Mrs. Parrish's point of view toward Negroes emerges as ultra-conservative, maternal, and Southern. Though it is usually hard to take offense at her plantation attitude toward her black friends, one becomes a little weary of her referring to them as "our Negroes." But some statements are, to say the least, surprising:

> Today the chain-gang is a thing of the past, and our roadsides and drainage ditches are neglected. No one need tell me that prison walls and ball-playing are proper substitutes for the healthy outdoor life that our convicts formerly led. There is a great deal of sentimentality connected with the discouragement of crime, and the abolition of the chain-gang is one of its manifestations.

The processes by which she arrives at certain positions and conclusions are rather difficult to follow, as where she ascribes the origin of the word "shanty" (a generic term for dock and seafaring songs sung in Georgia) to "the shanties in which the Negroes lived who originated so many of these songs. . . . " Again, to help substantiate her belief that vocal humming is an African survival she says: "An Anglo-African official tells me that the African side drum . . . makes a sound very similar to the hummed 'U-m-m-m' so frequently employed in the slave songs."

But if you don't take what Mrs. Parrish says too literally you will enjoy seeing the songs, some, no doubt, for the first time.

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East Georgia Backcountry

RIVER ROGUE. By Brainard Cheney. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1942. 443 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT PENN WARREN

THIS second novel by Brainard Cheney is a solid, interesting, and at times exciting book and marks a decided advance over his "Lightwood." Its scene, like that of "Lightwood," is laid in East Georgia, in a backcountry of rivers, swamps, squatters, and small farmers, lumbering, and frontier violence. More particularly, the world of the novel is the world of the rivers down which the raftsmen brought their timber to the Darien market in the last years of the past century. The quality of this world—the aspect of the country, the details of the occupation, the sprees in the bars and dives of Darien, the cunning, viciousness, and honor of the rogues, the code of the raftsmen, who felt themselves set apart from other men—is rendered with a fine imaginative precision. It is especially worthy of comment that Mr. Cheney has managed to accomplish this without indulging in "set pieces" of description and exposition, that he has absorbed the quality of this world into the texture of a narrative which is controlled, full-bodied, and exciting. But in his first novel Mr. Cheney showed the true novelist's appetite for the feel and detail of his world. He could report the physical and social aspects of the chosen milieu.

The gain marked by "River Rogue," however, lies in the direction of formal organization and in psychological depth. These two things actually amount, in this case as in many others, to the same thing. In so far as the basic question of the novel, the issue confronted by the main character, truly informs the whole, there is, necessarily, a tightening of the structure and an increased meaningfulness in the details of action.

The main character, Snake Sutton, first appears as an adolescent boy who, in shame at the fact of his bastardy, has run away to live in the swamps with a family of Negroes. Already he is feeling the compulsion to go out into the world, which for him means to get on the river, in order to vindicate himself. With Poss, his Negro companion, he takes a pick-up raft to Darien. There he must submit to having his raft seized on the charge that he has stolen the logs, and to being called bastard and "albino nigger." His effort has been premature. He returns to the swamp and begins anew the long process of becoming a raftsman, of vindicating himself, of training for the day when he can avenge the insults. But the process is not exactly what he had thought it would be. It is not merely a matter of mastering the techniques of the river, of learning the tricks of rafting and log stealing and fighting and drinking, of wrestling alligators or beating Diggs, the bully who had robbed him of his first raft. It is also a process of learning a kind of humility and of learning that there is a code, an ethic, in his occupation to which his personal feelings, his bitterness, the "pizen-juice" in him, must be subdued. This is the basic issue through the book.

The issue is, I think, extremely well handled in the first two sections of the novel, in the sections dealing with Poss and China. But it is possible that in the third section there is some blurring of effect, not because the issue itself is not stated (it is stated very positively), but because the documentation is not full enough. The trouble is not in the conception, but in the failure to push a little deeper into the implications of the conception. Snake as a river rogue is a thoroughly satisfying creation, but Snake as a Darien man sometimes seems a little schematized. This does not, however, invalidate the fundamental effect. There is enough in the bank to permit a little careless spending.

If you want to understand what is happening in the South today be sure to meet Eli Arn *whose rise and fall are the theme of*

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"Brainard Cheney writes with the homely hardness of a grind-stone. At his best he is a master at making detail, action and physical sensation palpable and almost Homerically fresh." — *Time*

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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMP

Lines to Jules Petit

By E. P. O'Donnell

YOU have frogs on the clothesline for breakfast
And a girl inside with breasts to pleasure your child;
Yet they find you brooding in the evening by the cistern
And your drawn brows smolder long in the window—
The lips worn thin with cursing worry the cold cigar—
When the thing coiled behind the hairy brake
Is probably not a landlord at all.

Let us remember we were younger . . .

Together we gambled money, Jules, and it was noon everywhere,
And afterwards our debts were forgotten like schoolbooks.
We shined the 'gators on the banks of Papa Noel,
Verily, the kindled ooze received our heels, the moon was gray.

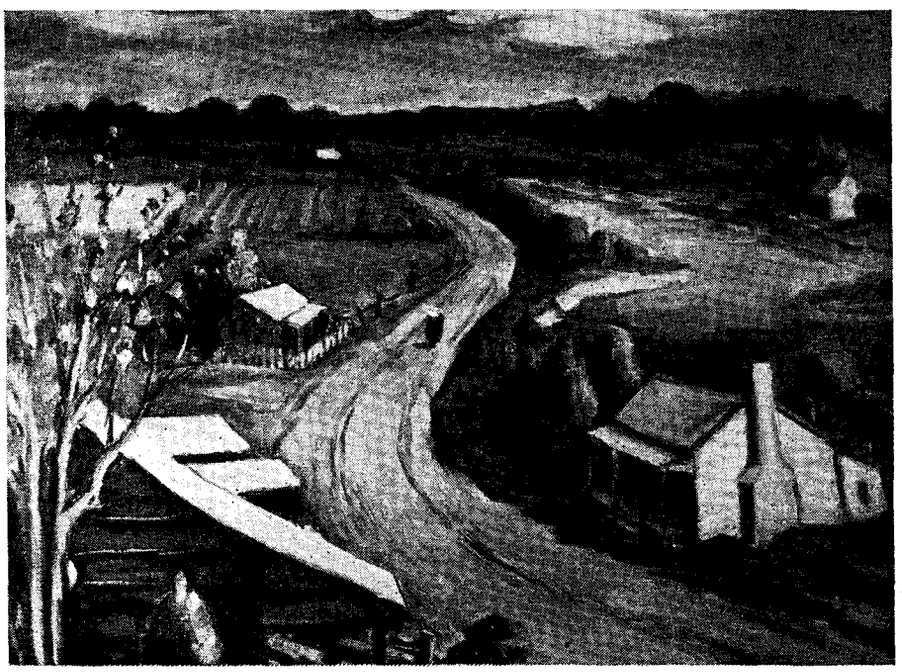
Who would not remember that plentiful bayou, and warm as a heart?
We grinned and tore open the plump dugs of the bay-gall,
We laughed to bear the twitching spoil away,
To crawl under a thunderhead and suck our roasted crawfish, and all the honorable pitchers of sour wine,
And our driftwood fire pouted when the fog was salty.

The bone we found one day in the sand,
Squatting by the ashen void—
The slant gazes lowered—the curved backs troubled—the limp hands quiet as hounds,
And the strange unheralded bone, still reaching—
Emptied of the humorous marrow, the aspiring sinew,
Trodden and polished by the cloven seas, and reaching.

I can close my eyes and remember that often we fought, two friends embracing in the mire.
It was always without knives, but with good hatred, for the wine was stern.
I could fight you tonight with good hatred—
No longer among the fine gullible fellows of the marsh—
But the lightning no longer strikes in the day
And the rushes are not heard.

Beyond such lenient dusk as this, no branches need emerge, or flowers,
If the fruit is there, the live globules dangling well apart,
And peavines mown and piled to the lowest nest
Huddle among the trunks like folk on a journey
Pausing for the yelp of a horn or the hungry fangs of the sun
To rend these wry omens that plovers trace in the sky—

And the thing coiled behind the hairy brake may be a reaching bone.



—*From the oil painting by Alberta Kinsey*

Bayou Country

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A SOUTHERNER DISCOVERS THE PROFESSIONAL SOUTHERNER

(*Continued from page 7*)

was of no moment to them whether the crime was the result of environment, heredity, or economic or physical sickness. The big four were going at the root of all evil. With Natchez as their laboratory and the local population as the guinea pig, they were going to solve the Race Problem. This was their premise:

The white people are Christians by heritage. The Negroes by heritage are savage drum beaters from Africa. A human being—a savage African with a veneer of white man's civilization smeared over him—was about to be dropped through the gallows to eternity. The white race and the black race would battle for that soul. The whites would try to draw it into Christianity, the blacks would seek to lure it back to the jungle. And the stronger race would win. This gigantic conflict was to take place in the subconcious minds of the two races.

Since all this was in the subconscious, neither the whites nor the blacks knew anything about it. But the battle was watched and charted, day by day, by the psychologists and when the fight was over there would be The Natchez Paper Pointing to the Solution of the Race Problem in the Deep South. This document, no doubt, will one day take its place at the side of another little treatise of equal inconsequence called The Urban Adolescent Colored Female, collected recently in New Orleans.

An effort by Lambert Davis to broaden the scope of the Natchez Inquiry by including the small Jewish population in the battle met with no success. An offer by Col. Hank Friedberg to book it and pay off for win, place, and show, drew naught but scorn.

Naturally, all of the Professional Southerners are not intellectual palookas. Some of them, competent writers, make an avocation of feeling downtrodden. A woman novelist and a good one, asked me quite seriously if I did not find it harrowing to live in Conquered Territory. And brother, she meant the South since Appomattox!

Another Professional Southerner who had just lost his job on a New York magazine lamented to a conference of Southern writers that Northern publishers would not print anything by a Southerner. This in the face of a dozen books by William Faulkner; and Julia Peterkin, T. S. Stribling, Ellen Glasgow, Caroline Miller, and Margaret Mitchell had not only published books but had been awarded the Pulitzer Prize by the Yankees. Additional literary kudos and considerable cash had been garnered by dozens of other writers from the South. "Trash," sneered this Professional Southerner. "Literary trash written by poor white trash."

"I'm from Oklahoma," George Milburn put in, "but I come from the best blood in the South, by God, suh. I'm a descendant of Moll Flanders."

The tone of the lament immediately changed. What the Professional Southerner had really meant to say

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FALL HITS

Among the New Southern Books

CARRY ME BACK

By Rebecca Yancey Williams

The author of *The Vanishing Virginian* tells of her own early life as Virginia's Junior Miss—a story rivalling Penrod and Tom Sawyer. Coming in October, $3.

COFFEE CREAM

By Carolyn Overstreet

A powerful love story of Virginia Crawford, Southern aristocrat and Milt Gardner, aggressive Northern business man. Coming Oct. 5th. $2.50

VIRGINIA IS A STATE OF MIND

By Virginia Moore

A captivating, delightful interpretation of the mind and spirit of the State of Virginia, with history, famous citizens, etc. Coming Oct. 9th. $3.

WELCUM HINGES

By Bernard Robb

Memorable Civil War tales by an old ex-slave, who served Mr. Robb's family in Virginia for many years. Illus. by Woodi Ishmael. Just published, $2.50

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THE SOUND OF AN AMERICAN

By David Ormsbee

Sterling North calls this new war novel "the year's most powerful novel." $2.50

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By Stanley Johnston

The eyewitness account of the U.S.S. *Lexington* and the Coral Sea Battle. Illus. $3.

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MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA
NOTICE
FOR FOREIGN BROADCASTS AUTHENTIC MANNER OF SPEECH IS VITAL Goebbels
A JOHN KAUNUS

"How y'all folks! We're sho' nuff happy to bring yo' all this mawnin's doins' on de woh front. Fust, let's hyar de most recentist annahncement fum Berlin—."

was that Southern writers must kowtow to the ideas and ideals of the Northerns, and that the purpose of the present conference was to help a certain clique of Professional Southerners get the job of operating a literary and critical magazine which the late Huey Long had just purchased from a broken down Texas outfit to give cultural tone to his own pet school. We—the non-members of the group—tried to picture Huey P. Long financing or even tolerating any kind of free criticism, so we just laughed.

After considerable thought, I find I like the South. We have plenty of faults—human rather than regional. It is discouraging to know that knavery, oppression, exploitation, racial prejudice, and poverty, and the diseases bred by these things, exist here. However, we did not invent these unhappy ailments nor do we hold a monopoly on them. The encouraging aspect of the situation is that we are improving.

I like other parts of this country. In my journeys I have come across some fine people and places, not much different from people and places in the South, once I adopted a broad-minded viewpoint. As these lines are being written, there are 30,000 Northern workers and their families in New Orleans doing war work. I like them. They don't like our coffee and they find our food too highly seasoned and this spring the town had its annual epidemic of sand fleas. But these Northerners do not try to make me drink what they call "Nerthern Corffee" nor do they expect me to eat pressure-cooked "green beans" instead of snap beans cooked with side meat; and a dime's worth of pine oil took care of the fleas.

No doubt the Professional Southerner has some value as a counter-irritant, like a mustard plaster. What he doesn't seem to realize is that while we are willing to try sulfanilimide and sociology, we don't want to give up our own physical, mental, and moral elixirs which are, respectively, calomel, corn whiskey and old time religion.

THE GEESE FLY HIGH

BY FLORENCE JAQUES; *illustrated by* FRANCIS L. JAQUES. 23 full-page drawings . . . 33 others! The Book-of-the-Month Club recommends this author-artist tour along the flyways of ducks and geese down the Mississippi River. "An informing and fascinating picture of little known country."—*Frank M. Chapman.* $3.

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WHAT DEEP SOUTH LITERATURE NEEDS

(*Continued from page 9*)

position of the Irish writer of a generation ago. Again, his country is a land of romance on the one hand, and poverty and bigotry on the other; moreover it is a land producing a great deal of literature and yet reading very little literature. (William Butler Yeats wrote one of his friends that for twenty-five years he had none of his books sent to Dublin for review, knowing that a provincial press, secretly ashamed of Ireland and anxious to ape London, would have had nothing of significance to say of them. For much the same reason, a Southern writer, particularly one who is attempting to redefine the Southern tradition, might ask his New York publisher to disregard the book reviewers of some of the large Southern cities.)

I SHOULD not like to force these parallels too far, but they may suggest the special advantages and disadvantages which a very definite provincial status confers, and further, that the disadvantages of provincialism, by the way, are double edged: it is quite as disastrous for the writer to be swayed too much by what New York likes, as to be pridefully contemptuous of anything except what he feels will flatter the prejudices of his own section.

I have tried to give some reasons for revising the pattern within which various practising writers of the Deep South are usually placed. But I have too little confidence in the revised pattern to wish to force the writers of the Deep South into it, even though I believe it provides a more meaningful set of categories than that generally given. For any set of categories involves over-simplifications. Even in "Gone with the Wind," as patly as it fits into the pigeonhole labelled "local color and the romantic past," one may discern an attempt at a kind of interpretation and a kind of evaluation of the tradition. And whatever one thinks of its defects of structure or of style, there is certainly a narrative drive which deserves its meed of praise. Again, the blurb thoughtfully added by the publishers to the dust jacket of Pat O'Donnell's "Green Margins" would seem to "place" the book definitely in the category of writings which purvey quaintness to the bored metropolis (this book, the publishers tell us, deals with literary materials never previously exploited, the delta country below New Orleans). But O'Donnell's book, though far from a great novel, deserves something better than this. Indeed, the most hopeful thing about present literature in the Deep South is the amount of resistance which novelists and short story writers have put up against the pressures exerted on them by publishers, reviewers, and the national clichés which dominate thinking on the whole subject of their region.

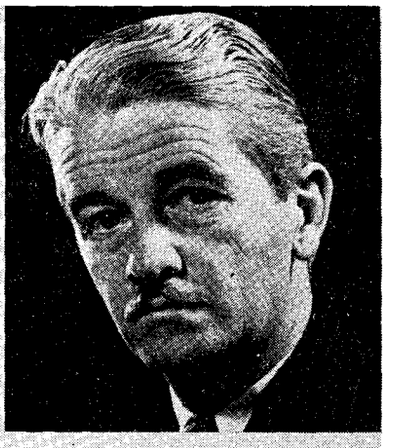
PERHAPS the healthiest aspect of all is the effort of the writers to find a form for their material. This is particularly significant among the younger writers. It is too much, perhaps, to expect to see the larger manifestations of form yet; but, on the level of style, what one finds in the work of Mary King (of Texas, now living in New Orleans), particularly in her short stories; of Peter Taylor (of west Tennessee, now in the army); and of Eudora Welty—to take only a few instances—is most promising. Eudora Welty's work is remarkable for

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

5. Matthew Arnold: "Requiescat."
7. Robert Burns: "A Red, Red Rose."
6. Edward Fitzgerald: "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam."
8. John Gay: "The Poet and the Rose."
9. Robert Herrick: "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time."
10. Ben Jonson: "To Celia."
4. Thomas Moore: "The Young May Moon."
1. Dorothy Parker: "One Perfect Rose."
2. Shakespeare: "Sonnet 54."
3. William Wordsworth: "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality."

Says TIME:

"William Faulkner's younger brother is not likely to be called that much longer."



JOHN FAULKNER

Author of MEN WORKING

"John Faulkner has quite a South of his own, and his own way of telling about it. He knows how to give social history the easy clarity of a good comic strip, the human resonance of a good novel. DOLLAR COTTON is the vivid history of Delta cotton and the people who raised it. Otis Town's lust for land, and the wartime price of cotton, carried him from poverty to fantastic wealth and ruin, and left him in the end with a certain indestructible magnificence."
—TIME

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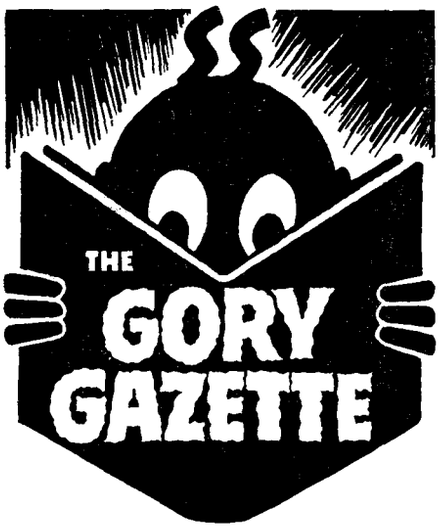

In the couple of months this column went on vacation a number of news items appeared on the Inner Sanctum Mystery docket. Let's look at the record.

In August RICHARD SALE created something of a stir with his *Passing Strange*, a tough little murder-medico-movie number that jolted a few citizens but delighted a great many more. There was some loose but satisfying talk by reviewers comparing SALE to DASHIELL HAMMETT and JAMES CAIN, while JACK KETCH of the New York *Herald Tribune* handed out this terse warning: "Hard to beat—if you don't shock easily."

In August, too, the manuscript of GYPSY ROSE LEE'S second murder novel, *Mother Finds a Body*, (Publication: October 9th) went to press. At the same time GYPSY wrote us a letter (about her new show, her wedding, her literary career, her mother, and life in general) that we sent to the printer as soon as we stopped laughing over it. It will be available, in pamphlet form, to anyone who writes in for it. (Just enclose price of mailing, three cents.)

During vacation the editor of Inner Sanctum Mysteries renewed the resolve to Give the Reader a Break. With mysteries, this high toned slogan means: always let the reader know what kind of crime he's getting into. Is it in the Raw Meat Division? The Tried and True Clue-cum-Detective school? The Hilarious-Homicide Squad? The Sinister Spy Department? It's up to us to forewarn you.

Aglow with this noble resolution, we proceed to Tell All about our latest entry in the Insomniac Stakes: *The Hangman's Handyman* by HAKE TALBOT. It's for those readers who like to be tortured by a completely fantastic and seemingly incredible crime, a murder situation where the How of it is just as baffling as the Who of it. For 309 pages of *The Hangman's Handyman* everybody in the book, as well as the reader (we hope!), is convinced that the victim has been killed by a curse. All right, *don't* take our word for it. Go out and get yourself a copy of

THE HANGMAN'S HANDYMAN
by Hake Talbot
AN INNER SANCTUM MYSTERY • PRICE $2.00

the variety of styles which she has mastered.

One should expect this concern for form to show most powerfully in poetry, and there, to be sure, the literature of the Deep South is weak. Except for the brilliant and powerful poetry of Robert Penn Warren (who no longer lives in the Deep South and whose work properly is to be connected with the Upper South) there are no first rate poets to be claimed. One can point, however, among the seasoned writers, to Katherine Anne Porter, who has reduced her material to form, not only line by line, but in terms of the larger whole—a writer whose work has been so thoroughly shaped and controlled that the casual reader tends to miss the fact that her work, too, contains the violent and even the sensational (see "Noon Wine"), but the violent ordered and freed from any sense of strain for the sensational.

I should like in this connection to bring these notes to a close with a further comment on William Faulkner. In Faulkner the attempt at a style, as has been pointed out from time to time, gets out of control and obtrudes itself on the work as a literary self-consciousness. At his best, however, (and I believe that his last book, "Go Down Moses," is among his best), the style tends to become an adjunct to the larger form, a form in which a real sense of the historical pattern, a real concern for moral values, and a real interest in the land and its people, coalesce into a work which is not the less important for all the fact that it carries no liberal slogans and propagandizes for no immediate program.

To sum up, the Deep South presents a picture of a section producing a vigorous and powerful literature—a more able literature one feels than the section deserves. I suggest that what it needs is not better writers but more intelligent readers, both at home and abroad, and a group of critics and reviewers more sensitive and more intelligent than it presently has.

Roark Bradford

The resurrection of the "last" packet boat on the Mississippi, *The Golden Eagle*, may lead to the establishment of a permanent River Museum in St. Louis, one of the world's great river cities, in the opinion of Robert Hereford, authority on river lore and author of the forthcoming "Old Man River." The Golden Eagle Club, composed of lovers and collectors of the traditions of old river-boat days, was organized to perpetuate the name.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
NOBODY'S VINEYARD *H. C. Bailey* (Crime Club: $2.)	English publican, mixed up in strange death of furtive adolescent, calls on Josh Clunk—who obliges through two more slayings.	Rampant villainy, pleasant romance, prime sleuthing, capital conversation, and Mr. Clunk at his most sanctimonious and slipperiest.	First rate
NO CRIME FOR A LADY *Zelda Popkin* (Lippincott: $2.)	Dynamite attached to auto ignition disperses unsavory N. Y. politician. Mary Carner momentarily forsakes shoplifters for bigger and nastier game.	Sinuous plot, variety of odd characters—from amusing Shakespeare-spouter to sinister ward-heelers, plentiful action, and surprise finish.	Good job
DEAD OF THE NIGHT *John Rhode* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	English peer inspecting home guards on midnight practice—and criticizing everything—disappears. Other officers at last find him very dead.	This Rhode doesn't lead to Dr. Priestley's sanctum but it's exciting nevertheless, with remarkably good wartime background.	Middlin'

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The Phoenix Nest

An Inquiry

MRS. SAMUEL Y. GIBBON of Jenkintown, Penna., asks, in connection with the *SRL's* "Who Wrote This?" series, whether our readers can cast some light on the authorship of a story she remembers from some ten years ago. It was an account, she says, of the end of the world, presumably, for it broke off abruptly with dramatic effect. The story began with a mysterious severing of communications with the Far East. Then ships on the Pacific were unheard from. Next San Francisco reported winds of gale force from the West. Then the telegraph went dead (pre-radio?) from the West Coast. A train-load of scientists set out for the West and their last report was of strong west winds.

Then silence. Ships for Europe were jammed. Refugees poured into East coast ports. The story ends with the protagonist standing on a high building in New York looking over our seething panic-stricken city. All eyes are on the flag hanging limp on the pole at the very top of the building. It shudders, flutters, waves, and finally stiffens, "pointing east, as if it were of bronze." The tale has stuck in my mind as a good piece of imaginative creation reinforced by plausible detail. I should like to know where it can be found. I have so enjoyed the "Who Wrote This?" series that I am bold to ask your help.

Deep South

By Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner and Mary R. Gardner

Illustrated with dramatic interview-material gathered at first-hand by two white and two Negro sociologists and anthropologists, DEEP SOUTH studies the economic and social behavior patterns of a southern city—from loftiest white families to lowliest black.

"A powerful and eloquent appeal to the American people to understand their problem of the white and Negro. . . ."

HOWARD W. ODUM,
Saturday Review

"Vivid, verbatim records of class and caste attitudes, pointed anecdote and sharp autobiographical detail, all threaded together in a systematic statement. . . . A book that the socially literate must read at once."

MARGARET MEAD,
N. Y. Herald-Tribune

558 pages, $4.50

THE UNIVERSITY of CHICAGO PRESS

Parodies

Do people remember the parodies both in prose and verse of one "John Paul," actually Charles H. Webb, who was, in that respect, the Louis Untermeyer of his day? Carleton published his book in 1876, with illustrations by Sol. Eyttinge, Jr., and others, and faked quotations by various authors. He parodied the novels "Griffith Gaunt" and "St. Elmo", and wrote a parody novel, "A Wicked Woman," from which we remember the horrible line: "Hoop springs perennial in the female chest." It was in the days when they wore hoops! They also wore bustles. There is a very good glimpse of a lady with a bustle, so to speak in its raw state, in Orson Welles's latest picture, "The Magnificent Ambersons." Of course, the fame of the books Webb parodied was fleeting. Bret Harte did far better parodies than Webb; but after all, the extravagances of "St. Elmo" were considered seriously by our forefathers. Webb, at least, tried to break that up. We remember, from "A Wicked Woman" that several ingenious devices were pictured which, on the principle of the latter, pried women's backs forward at the graceful angle then known as The Grecian Bend. Again horribly, the author remarks, "She did not walk thus because she had proud, but because she was pried." Mr. Webb was also the author of "Sedition."

Angel Island

Last week our sleuths tracked "Goosie" to its lair, and this week it transpires that the story Inez Haynes Gillmore Irwin wrote was called "Angel Island," published by Henry Holt & Company in 1914. The briefer serial version appeared in the *American Magazine* August-December 1913. Our informant tells us that "five Shipwrecked men of varied attainments found five equally individual wingéd women, whom they named, horribly: Lulu, Chiquita, Clara, Peachy, and Julia, before they cornered the girls and de-winged them (with a knife!). The women were chastely dressed in sea-kelp. [A pity—Ed.] At the end Julia dies in bearing a wingéd boy. This probably conveyed something ineffably subtle to the suffragists of the period. I spent the summer of 1917 in the kitchen of an Elizabethtown (N. Y.) summer hotel; even there I heard a good deal about equal suffrage, since Inez Milholland Boissevain, martyr of the cause, had lived in the neighborhood. Louis Untermeyer wasn't there then."

(*Continued on page* 32)

Acclaim for
HAROLD SINCLAIR'S
lively history of
THE PORT OF
New Orleans

"Harold Sinclair doesn't ballyhoo wickedness, nor does he gush. He has wrought well for the general reader who would learn something of the personality of one of our most picturesque and exotic cities, although there is enough spice of opinion in his book to hold many a reader who knows many of the facts."
—NEW YORK *Times Book Review*

"A careful and colorful account of one of America's outstanding ports. Intrigue, war, vice and high finance all played their interesting parts in the history of seaport and city and Harold Sinclair has been scrupulously fair in distributing his material."
—BOSTON *Globe*

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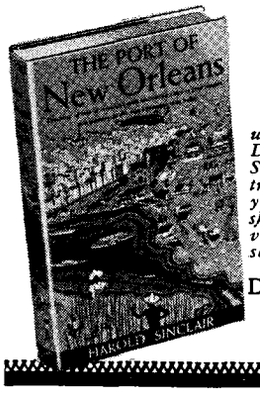

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Again our informant is Earle Walbridge. His touching on woman-suffrage makes us a little sad. It was always ridiculous that, in a democracy at least, women shouldn't vote; but regarding the way things have gone since we don't see that their voting has bettered matters a whole lot. A woman now makes a speech in Hartford that receives nearly a whole page in the *Times;* but this keynote speech to the Republican State Convention is by one not particularly renowned for that solidarity with her own sex which was the keynote of woman suffrage. Also, Mrs. Luce is a political conservative of purest ray, while women suffragists of their era were regarded as dangerous radical innovators. Well, we saw "Wake Island" the other night, anyway, and found it inspiring. Moreover, it seemed to us the real berries. Rarely has heroism in battle had a better portrayal.

Sterne and the Resurrection Men

We wonder whether it is actually true that the Curate of Coxwold, Laurence Sterne, that delightful and eccentric eighteenth century novelist, suffered disinterment of his body after death, at the hands of the so-called "resurrection men," who are said to have then delivered it to an anatomy professor of Cambridge. A gentleman who was present swore that he recognized Sterne's face the moment he saw the body. Sterne died destitute. of pleurisy, in a mean lodging in Old Bond Street, and was buried in a graveyard on the Bayswater Road. The only person attending his interment was Becket, his book-seller. His wife had gone insane ten years before his death. It is one of the most gruesome private histories in literature. Do you remember Jerry Cruncher, in "A Tale of Two Cities," who was an odd-job man by day and a body-snatcher by night? There was also, in reality, the notorious William Burke of Edinburgh who, with his accomplice William Hare, smothered people in order to sell their bodies for dissection. Robert Louis Stevenson was fascinated by the resurrection men, and wrote a story called, "The Body Snatcher," though not one of his best. We seem to have become exceptionally charnel in our discourse, but we can't help adding the quatrain Theodore Hook wrote concerning William Weare, the gambler, who once lived in the dirty old Inn of Chancery in the Strand—a fragrant character of nineteenth century London!—

They cut his throat from ear to ear,
His brains they battered in;
His name was Mr. Williams Weare,
He dwelt in Lyon's Inn.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

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The Crostics Club

MRS. JEANET LOOMIS SULLIVAN, who finds DCs a greatly needed Ivory Tower from the cares that infest our too troubled day, adds to our reference books Edith Hamilton's new "Mythology." She writes, "I find it much more comprehensive than any other like work. It interprets Norse as well as the classic myths, the latter being taken directly from Greek literature in which field Miss Hamilton is so much at home. The excellent index should make it especially useful to searchers after obscure gods and heroes." I myself had ordered on faith Miss Hamilton's book knowing the charm of her other writing, and I was pleased at an index not as a rule found in non-technical books.

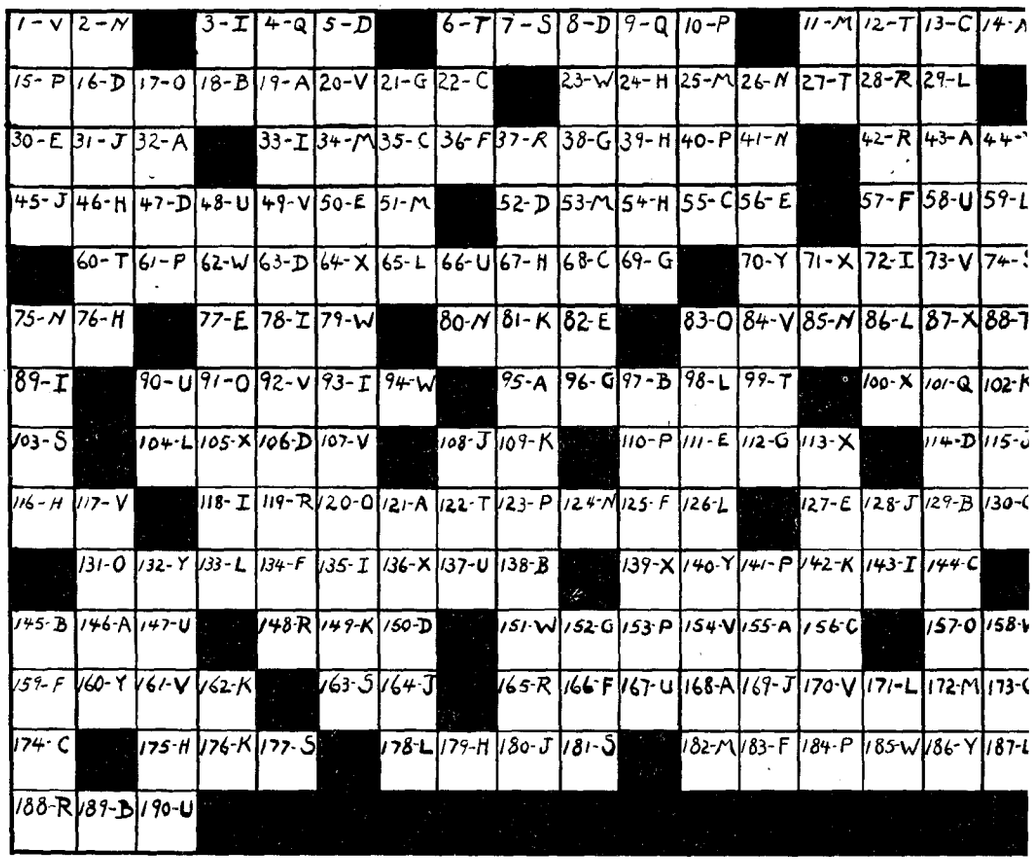
To my stock I have also added the "American Thesaurus of Slang," by Lester V. Berrey and Van Den Bark —a complete and truly marvellous compendium of colloquial slang arranged along the order of Roget's "Thesaurus" with a satisfying index. Its use will be reflected in coming DCs.

The long-awaited Merriam-Webster "Dictionary of Synonyms" is on the market and copiously illustrated from ancient and modern authors. It is alphabetically arranged like their Dictionary with helpful cross references. The product of four years of collaborative editorial efforts, it should be a standard in its field.

Maude E. Hayes, a semi-shut-in of Chicago, begs me to give you "more cheerful, humorous, or even silly quotations in these depressing times." I am not unmindful of the need for fun and I am always on the alert for literary humor. In fact, the past few months have been devoted to research in that line for Series No. 14 to be devoted entirely to satire, wit, and humor. The humor I want, unhackneyed, isn't easy to find. So often it depends for its effect on misspelling or dialect, either of which makes puzzling difficult; or the point of the incongruity falls beyond the space limit; or the context needs further illumination. Again, the best work by our modern humorists is to be found only in scattered magazines. That recent quotation from Lewis Carroll, by the way, came from a most satisfying volume containing all his work "Logical Nonsense," edited by Philip C. Blackburn and Lionel White.

Harvey Officer, whom I quoted last week, tells me that he has no real association with literary people except as a charter member of the "Baker Street Irregulars," of which Christopher Morley is the Chief. However, he has "lectured on and off on music history and appreciation, on poetry, religion, and art, knows a little about a lot of things but is not learned or scholarly about any of them."

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 445

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 27 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Advantage; control (2 wds.)

B. Puffed out or up.

C. Compound racemes (Bot.)

D. That which widens one's vision, as startling news (2 wds.)

E. An uncivilized transaction (2 wds.; colloq.)

F. Title and heroine of a Shaw play (1897).

G. Like a lout or bumpkin (U. S.)

H. Persons of stimulating activity (2 wds.; slang).

I. Self-reliance; audacity.

J. Emphasis on heredity as explaining the origin of intelligence, etc. (Psychol.)

K. A rapid gallop or ride.

L. Energy in manual labor (facetious; 2 wds.)

M. Chatters.

N. Newly-born.

O. Does or makes superficially.

P. Equipped.

Q. Heroine in title of play by Masefield (1909).

R. Contorted; wrung.

S. Nonsense (British).

T. Country in So. America.

U. To cease to care for (colloq.; 2 wds.)

V. Exhilaration; animation.

W. Well-known poem by Kipling ("Even as You and I") (with *The*).

X. The altar Jacob built on the scene of his vision (Bib.)

Y. Force of utterance (style, speech, etc.)

WORDS

95 43 155 121 168 19 146 32

145 138 129 18 97 189

156 35 174 13 22 68 55 144

114 5 8 16 63 106 52 47 150

56 111 127 82 50 30 77

125 166 36 159 134 57 183

69 38 130 96 173 21 112 152

76 179 54 116 175 24 39 67 46

3 118 33 143 89 93 72 135 78

31 108 180 128 115 169 164 45

142 176 81 109 149 102 162

65 98 104 126 178 171 133 187 86 29 59

25 11 34 172 182 53 51

2 80 124 14 41 75 85 26

83 17 91 120 131 157

61 141 15 184 153 123 10 110 40

4 101 9

188 165 119 148 42 28 37

181 163 7 103 74 177

6 60 27 122 99 88 12

48 190 66 167 90 58 147 137

73 170 154 1 49 161 107 92 84 117 20

23 185 62 151 158 94 79

71 64 139 105 87 100 113 136

132 160 44 140 70 186

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TRADE WINDS

ON THE DAY that I returned from a two-week vacation in the Maine woods, I found exactly sixty-one publishers' publicity releases piled neatly on top of my desk. Some publishers have learned that there is no point whatever in sending out a publicity story unless they actually have something to say. Others, however, stubbornly insist on maintaining a regular schedule of three or four communiques a week, regardless of the fact that this necessitates the inclusion of an almost incredible percentage of unquotable drivel. At the 1941 Booksellers' Convention in Washington, bookstore owners, clerks, and critics implored the publishers to stop the flow of unsolicited circulars, post cards, multigraphed sales exhortations, and meaningless publicity jottings. But there seems to be nothing on earth that will convince some die-hards that, in times like these, nobody gives a Continental about Authoress Lizzie Tischtuch's summer activities, or the sale of Gideon Billingsgate's murder mystery to Sweden and Zambesia.

The notes that I found awaiting me, for instance, included the following fascinating tidbits. One lady author had ridden in the caboose of a Great Northern Railroad train across the Continental Divide and another wouldn't let her publishers call her Elizabeth. "My parents named me Betty," she explained simply. A popular mystery writer had himself fingerprinted for the first time; and a luncheon was given for an Argentine artist that nobody in the book business ever heard of. Second, third, and fourth editions of any number of unpublished books were being "rushed through the presses" (has any book ever been printed in a leisurely fashion?) and a lady "well known for her hobby of collecting cemeteries" threw caution to the winds and admitted flatly that "she gets many of the names for her characters from old tombstones."

Obviously I had learned in one fell swoop everything of note that had occurred in literary circles during my short absence, and I headed for Random House in a glow of contentment. The very first thing that caught my eye when I got there was a note from our contract department. "We just sold the Swedish rights to Frank Fenton's 'A Place in the Sun,' it read, "and we thought you might like to send out a squib about it " . . .

WHEN A BIG-LEAGUE ball-player has a day off, tradition decrees that he spend the afternoon watching two other clubs tee off against each other. By the same token, a publisher devotes a large part of a vacation to perusing the books that have been paying the overhead of his competitors. Publishers frequently are asked, "What do you read when you're doing it for pleasure, and not for business purposes?" Here is my own report, for what it may be worth.

I limbered up with two first-rate murder mysteries: Agatha Christie's "Murder in Retrospect" (I am a devoted admirer of M. Hercule Poirot) and Alice Campbell's "Ringed with Fire." The former had a trifle too little action for my taste, and the latter a trifle too much, but a mystery addict will not go wrong with either. Next I sailed through an advance copy of Howard Smith's "Last Train from Berlin," which is required reading for anybody who still believes that Nazi myth of invincibility. Certainly it is the most cheering war book of the year, although I wondered how the usually meticulous Knopf editorial staff had allowed so many repetitious paragraphs to remain in the text. I hope and expect that this book will be on the best-seller lists by the time this column appears in print.

My next book was "See Here, Private Hargrove," an unalloyed delight, and then I tackled Jerome Weidman's "I'll Never Go There Any More." Weidman writes brilliantly, and has an uncanny ear for dialogue, but I confess that I could not finish his book. In real life his principal characters would revolt me, and it's not a great deal more pleasant to encounter them in print—particularly when they are depicted with such clinical skill. Period.

Finally, I read James Aldridge's "Signed with Their Honor" and made a bet with one of my companions that every review in a New York paper would mention the name of Ernest Hemingway at least once. For all its derivative quality, it is a fine and impressive novel and I recommend it without qualification. Many of the characters and situations are obviously drawn from real life. In fact, the author was so anxious to complete his manuscript and return to the wars that he neglected to disguise the name and regiment of one of the minor figures in the book who does not even appear on the scene until the last hundred pages or so. The publishers discovered the slip in the nick of time, but even so they had to postpone the publication date for weeks, and recall thousands of copies that had been distributed to booksellers all over the country. What did they do with all the books that had to be withdrawn? I tried to find out for you, but the informants I was counting on seem to have gone into training for a censorship job in Cairo. . . .

AN AMIABLE and talented young friend of mine has a harmless obsession for inventing a new nom de plume for himself every other season or so. His prose style is forceful and bold, but it is still undisciplined, and he realizes himself that his development as a writer is far from completed. It is perhaps a tribute to his rugged individuality that every critic from Sands Point to Seattle can penetrate his disguise in five pages of text, but his agent still maintains a childlike belief that at least once he will be able to fool the customers.

The September, 1942, product of this voluntary and prolific schizophrene is a lusty tale that has been launched by a publisher who has not encountered him in any one of his previous incarnations, and has executed an advance campaign for the book that would delight any author. In one particular, however, he has made a mistake that calls for a howl of protest. Comparisons of new novels with books like "War and Peace" and "A Farewell to Arms" are ridiculous. They show utter lack of imagination and good taste on the part of the blurb writer, are an irresistible incentive to any honest critic to reach for the nearest wise crack, and make the poor author, who almost never has any part whatever in the proceedings, look like a pretentious booby.

The Treasury Department has been imploring publishers to devote some of their jacket space to messages on war bonds and stamps. The publishers ought to leap at the opportunity. It means that they will have that much less room for ridiculous blurbs and overstatements. . . .

A VERY VIOLENT gentleman stormed into our office last week with a manuscript that proved that the country's troubles were the exclusive result of communist machinations, and that we were disturbing ourselves quite needlessly about the Nazis and the Japs. "If you can get my book into the hands of the President," he cried, "he will grab every communist so-and-so in the United States and throw him into jail." "If I may interpret these temperate statements of yours correctly," my partner, Bob Haas, remarked quietly, "your ideal is for this country to be dictated but not Red " . . .

BENNETT CERF.

BUY WAR BONDS AND STAMPS

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PERSONALS

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WELL, THE SUMMER is over and we are not sorry. Summer is lovely but autumn in New York is nothing short of perfection. Besides it brings winter nearer and with winter comes snow, blizzards and terrible cold in Russia, that the Russians don't mind, but that their visitors do not thrive on.

New York is delightful at this time of year and the most delightful spot in which to get the full flavor of the Town is of course the Hotel Algonquin, 59 W. 44th St., in the heart of the theatre district and four short blocks from Radio City. Did I tell you that it is a regular TRANSIENT hotel? Well, some folks don't know that. It is so. And we want to see YOU.

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—Sherlock Holmes

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IT'S fought in the mind. It's fought with a will to win. It's fought with a belief in a cause worth dying for.

That will, that belief, is known as *morale.*

Our enemies have had years of indoctrination. They have been conditioned to believe themselves part of a "new order" . . . to which the contribution of their lives is small but all-important. They believe themselves cogs in a vast machine.

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